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# RELIGION AND THE MODERN MIND

## AND OTHER ESSAYS IN MODERNISM

BY

FRANK CARLETON DOAN

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# PREFACE

I

My good cousin asked me the other day: "For whom is your forthcoming book being written?" I was obliged to make answer: "That must remain to be seen. We'll have to wait until the book has come forth in fact." Still, as it is being thrown upon the public there is no harm in my declaring by way of preface the good *intention* of the book. What I intend is to influence you who read me understandingly to clearer and sincerer thinking upon matters which do vastly concern every sober man — matters of free religion and a modern spirit. As I have laboriously read the proof-sheets of this, my first-born book, I have remarked many an imperfection which, alas, it was all too late to correct. I do not ask the critical reader to condone these: they are, I know, inexcusable by any test you may apply. What I do ask is that you along with me should sincerely experiment with the experience of God herein recorded. For, let me assure you, it *is* an experience. If at any point I have seemed to write for the mere pleasure of the thing, or if for the moment I have seemed to expend my energies in worming out of my inner consciousness a *weltanschauung* amazing to the reason merely and not tolerable in terms of life; then and there I beg you to read lightly.

But if in places you find me writing unaffectedly and sincerely of matters that do concern me, and *may* you, most deeply, then I conjure you to read profoundly there; to experiment largely in the Life you glimpse there.

The essays sewed together in this little volume were delivered on very various occasions. One of them was occasioned by a visitation of certain colleges and universities I was authorized to make as Billings Lecturer for the American Unitarian Association. One or two others were used in the first instance as chapel talks before our students in the theological school, and afterwards printed here and there. The essay on prayer was given in substance as a vesper address before two or three colleges and universities here in the West. The gist of another was used in such places as the University of Wisconsin and Ohio State University, where I have had occasional engagements. The essay on Life Everlasting was originally delivered as the Channing Hall address in Boston. And so on. It doesn't matter much what the precise history of these following papers has been. As they now stand they are much revised; and, I dare say, anyway, they have been mostly forgotten by those who may have heard or read them in their original form.

Mostly, but not wholly, I may be permitted to say. For I have in my letter-file a collection of notes from friends, some known and others unknown, who tell me that these thoughts con-

cerning the larger Freedom and the larger Life have in marked measure brought them freedom and life. The letters are mostly from men,— indeed with two exceptions, come in all cases from men. I confess I find this in itself an encouragement to try my hand at addressing a larger circle of these men by printing a book. Women have their religion as a matter of course: very tender, sensitive, unspeakable withal, but *of course.* I have in all my life encountered only one woman-atheist;— or is it as many as *two?* God, it would seem, is congenital with his feminine offspring; I cannot hope that my essays will do more than perhaps deepen and intensify a humanism in religion which is already theirs by a sort of divine right.

But perhaps the experience of God-Man — if the name sounds awkward in your ears then choose some other; for the name doesn't in the least matter the *experience* I am seeking to set forth — the experience of Man-God I aim to express here may astonish some men into trying the same experiment in divinity. The point is, to strip your manhood most scrupulously, most painfully bare of all its filthy parts, to lay aside your bestialities and liberate your manhoods, to expose the naked, cold-as-steel soul of you to the eternal tempering energy of the world's fire-dust; then by reacting to transpierce the universe's self with this pure and strong manhood you bear, and call the resulting experience God, God-Man,

Man-God, or by what name soever God may will. That experience is your religion's sole deep concern. That experience *is* you; it *is* God.

Perhaps this will appeal, I say, to men of iron constitution. God grant this.

## II

How often does one encounter in the history of the human spirit the contemptible argument against this or that vision of the world and God: it is the vision of youth. There are those, doubt it not, my younger brethren! who will condemn your humanist experience of God on precisely such ground: it is the philosophy of youth, enthusiastic, breathless, whimsical, shallow. But, mind you, a man's God, whether he be a young enthusiast or an old partisan of his God, does most tantalizingly *equal* his age, does most precisely and scrupulously *fit* his own annual nature. If then the God of younger men generally is youthful, buoyant, adolescent; then by the same token your God, my very dear old friends, is proportionally aged, level-headed, palsied, senile. It is just a matter of temperament, or of age, so far as I can see. Certainly there is no point in *arguing* the case.

Now, it seems to me, jesting and back-biting aside, that we may as well face a vital dilemma,—a vital, inner disparity of human temperaments which must be felt, I'm sure, by every man who moves with any sort of conscious and serious pur-

pose among his fellows. I mean that immemorial and ineradicable conflict between men who are radically enthusiastic or conservatively partisan in all the deep concerns of this life. This alienation of men of the one temperament from men of the other is after all not much a matter of years, I think. There is no measuring of youthfulness or agedness in such terms. It is rather a matter of temperament, of the degree of *freshness* in a man's soul of whatever age. On the one hand you may find frank, fresh spontaneity, openness to conviction, an insatiable and voracious appetite for living being kept up at any cost through all a man's no matter how many years of life. This freshness, as I have remarked again and again in moving among men, is dead against, or rather most livelily against, that sober, balanced, withered *steadiness* observable on the other hand in most successful business men and in all religious bigots. Perpetual youth against congenital agedness — there's where the conflict of man with man is severest and most irrepressible. It is in a very deep sense a conflict of god with god! For your God, as I have said, accords with and fights on the side of your temperamental age.

Not that one of the perpetually youthful temper would fail to profit by the passing years. For one I hope to change notably in the quarter century ahead of me, the period of service vouchsafed me before I attain that venerable, scholastic majority when philosophy teachers are apt to

be "retired"— as the delightfully frank phrase has it. As Stevenson says somewhere: "To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty is to have been *stupefied* for a score of years." I hope, God furthering me! to view with profound dissatisfaction this first-born book of my soul ere I begin to attain my "majority," my age of retirement. Indeed, I even now, before ever the page-proofs have reached the bindery, remark a plenty of blemishes I would gladly remove from my book's more uncomely parts. But to make such changes in the interest of a clearer and perhaps solemner expression of the deep thing you seek to communicate, to deepen one's life and broaden one's views of it all, to venture beyond the shallows of youth into the deeps of a larger, fuller Life, ever to enlarge one's craft is one thing; to change one's course altogether is quite another. As to altering my present straight course and careening quite elsewhere on life's way; as to believing at, say, sixty or so, what is now to my mind only so much stuff and nonsense, so much monstrous blasphemy of him I here call God — I could not endure *that* without losing my humanity, without breaking my heart, without debasing and destroying the very soul of me.

As for me then, being as I am, I must follow my own course. In youth or old age, in life or in death, in body or in spirit, I give and dedicate my true self, in all sincerity and simplicity, to him I call God-Man — a very God of everlast-

ing youth and perpetually buoyant Life. Being *so*, you see that if I ever *do* outgrow the experience of God herein made public I am indeed a lost soul; all the sweet juices of my human being will have been bruised out of me upon the altar stone of the world's crushing Reality. In such a state of flat and withered deadness of soul I think I can see the somnolent, conservative, aged world-ground yawning to receive my defeated and juiceless spirit. God forbid *that!*

"Sunnyside," Meadville, Pennsylvania.
September, 1909.

# I

# RELIGION AND THE MODERN MIND

## I

What is the place of religion in modern life? Within the last quarter century this problem has been raised so frequently and from such trifling points of view that its familiarity, I fear, has bred a certain contempt in the mind of the thoroughly modern man. In his way of thinking these various attempts to establish once more a vital connection between the church and human life are all, each in its own way, beside the point. They are too secular; or too apologetic; or too defensive; or, if you please, too *practical*. The thing needed is a revival of those eternal verities in which all men of whatever culture have always instinctively believed. What men want is the re-establishment of the church as a distributer of the bread of life, of the pulpit as a place of moral and prophetic vision. Of course the practical man doesn't put his case just this way. But put it for him frankly, unaffectedly, above all undogmatically, and he will bow his assent.

Some months ago certain telling editorials appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, a periodical hardly to be accused of sentimentality in its inner springs. These editorials called for a reviving of the impulses of religion in our own modern life.

I was struck by the absence of cant, the positive ring of sincerity in the tone of these editorial appeals. I was myself about to go on a pilgrimage to several of the colleges and universities of the great Northwest. As official lecturer for one of the great religious denominations of the country my object was to commend the ministry to these young men as a manly and commanding profession. I asked Mr. Pratt what I should say to these college and university men. He replied that since religion is the profoundest instinct, the deepest concern of human being, to be its sponser before men is indisputably a man's most sacred calling. But the trouble, he said, with the modern minister is that "he preaches the truth as if it were fiction!"

Now instead of a simple and passionate emphasis of eternal truth the modern minister is urged by religion's ill-advised promoters to adopt all sorts of practical, not to say sensational devices for reclaiming the modern man. Not long ago several of our leading magazines opened their columns to suggestions of ways whereby the church might be made once more a vital power in the lives of men. The prescriptions were many and radical. The church, for one thing, should abandon mediæval cathedral architecture and should rather imitate the style of the great, down-town business blocks: men would feel more at home in such surroundings, we were told. The church, for another thing, should become "in-

stitutional," aiming to serve the whole man from his head to his feet: "You can't convert a man on an empty stomach," they said; "nor can you compete with the theaters and such places unless in your church you duplicate in some fashion their more popular attractions." As another measure of self-preservation the church was urged to elaborate some scheme of Christian Socialism wherewith to compromise on the one hand the Christian with the socialist and on the other hand the socialist with the Christian.

It was about this time that one of our foremost American psychologists of religion was heard to say in private that, if the church would keep within its portals the independent, thinking men of to-day, the preacher must allow these men to "talk back." The day of priestly hocus-pocus, when the church might exercise an external authority over the lives of men, has of course gone by. On that we are agreed. My friend, the psychologist, swaying to an opposite extreme, holds that the prophetic and apostolic office of the preacher is itself lost forever! It only remains for the church to become a sort of club-house, a conference hall; the minister unfrocked, his exalted function lowered, would, I suppose, serve as a sort of honorary president of this present century club organized for the exchange of opinion upon the deep and eternal concerns of life!

The gist of all these inexpert opinions as to

the tonic best suited to revive moribund churches is after all contained in the recommendation, so often repeated in these days, that the preacher should give his people "practical" sermons. It doesn't much matter, he is told by his worldly counselors, what the theological creed of his church may be: men won't understand that very well anyway. It were better to dispose of it quietly at some point early in the service, then proceed — to preach truth as if it were fiction!

These remedies, I say, are too external and fumbling; in a word, too *practical*. They are not heroic and tonic enough. They do not feed men's spirit with the sincere milk of truth.

One is bound to acknowledge in passing that the "religious" papers have had little to do with these more external specifics for the restoration of religion to a place of influence in modern life. On the whole they have endeavored to rehabilitate the church in more vital directions. But, here again, there is palliation and want of clearness and heroism in the view taken of the church's relation to modern life. Too much of the nervous discussion which in recent years has filled the columns of the religious weeklies has been merely apologetic, guarded and abjectly defensive. Earnest appeals are incessantly made to the supreme and indisputable place of religion in the civilization of the past. "Surely," we are told, "men cannot yet afford to dispense with the great instruments of fear and faith by which religion

through the ages has controlled and developed human civilization!" But why will these zealous defenders of the faith persist in confusing *religion* with an *institution* called the "Church," or for that matter, religion with that particular denominational theory which they happen to profess? To confuse the eternal impulses of religion — fear, faith, love and the like — with an institution of whatever sort or age is in itself narrowing, misleading and mischievous.

And then the church as an institution has *not* been an invariable instrument of civilization, as every historian well knows. In some instances it has dammed the springs of human life to the point of inundation: its institutional interests have clogged and obstructed those very impulses of fear and faith and love upon whose spontaneous and free action the religious life itself depends.

Least of all can it be claimed that the church by conserving religious *dogmas* — and this sounds curiously like the claim often made these days in defense of the "faith of the fathers"— has been the faithful promoter of human rights and progress. In this matter of dogma it has been invariably her arch-enemies, science and philosophy, who have usurped the church's instrumentalities of civilization and enlightenment. No doubt the church has always been the great conserver; but so often, alas, it has conserved the wrong thing! — the shell instead of the kernel, the dogma instead of the living impulse of which

the dogma is but the ill-fitting investment. In all this I would be understood: these defenders of the church intend sincerely enough to revive and reëstablish the eternal things for which as an institution the church ideally stands. But always their argument is overshadowed by the spectre of the church as an institution of dogmas long since cast out by men of the modern mind. Attempts to revive the church in this or that historic form of doctrine are too plainly confuted by the solemn fact that, as an institution of dogma,— and that is what the Christian Church, *as historic,* is,— the church is dead.

## II

It is a mistake in any case to lump all modern men and then attempt to establish some single relation between them and the religious life. In the following pages the discussion aims not at men in general, but rather at a certain type of man, the man with what I have presumed to call the "modern mind."

For in my intercourse with men I seem to remark among them several types of mind. These temperaments of course intercross constantly: no man stands in any perfectly single relation to the church. But on the whole his attitude may be marked as facing *predominantly* one way or another in religious matters. Among these several temperaments I have been especially impressed with three types of mind. Let me mark

these as "indifferent," "confused" and "modern."

As "indifferent" I describe the man who has simply dropped the services of religion out of his life. He is commonly regarded as the leading type of mind in the modern world of affairs. All his energies seem to have become commercialized. He is a practical and, worst of all, an *unconscious* materialist. His materialism, unlike that of a former period of human history, has no *conscious* principle in it. It isn't as if he had deliberately rejected idealistic impulses as unreal and unsubstantial. By long process of habituation the commonplace exercises of his daily rounds of affairs have simply displaced the more ideal and poetic passions of life. He has lost the art of aspiring, of poetizing, of enthusing over things unseen and inestimable. In all these regions of finer impalpable culture he is a stranger, awkward, nonplussed and indifferent.

It is commonly alleged that these indifferents are in the majority in modern life. Certainly their case is most grievous; they are of all men most miserable. But their tribe, as I believe, is very rare indeed. Many men by their habitual silence and by their regular avoidance of religious services appear to belong to this tribe of indifferents. But in fact these men of affairs are in countless instances concealing minds that are longing for the Eternal. Anyone who feels with sympathetic touch the pulse of our modern life

will find that life not dull and sluggish at all but deeply alive to the things of the spirit, wearied of the world's practical materialism, sick of all its sad infidelity. The simple fact is now, as it has ever been in periods of desolating materialism, that men on all sides are minded to revolt toward simpler and diviner ways of living their days. I have learned in passing among men that the eternal verities are being sought in the most unlikely places and by the most unlikely representatives of our modern life. It is profoundly significant that men of practical mind and of worldly resources are quietly joining the ranks of life's idealists, and are wanting somehow to replace the church in its former position of jurisdiction over the lives of men.

Men's silence then, as they will tell you in hours of unwonted confidence, is owing to no indifference of mind in matters religious but solely to their sense of unfitness to discuss the idealistic impulses fermenting in their lives. They are indifferent, I imagine, to the church's ofttimes sensational or apologetic handling of ideals which in them lie too deep for utterance. In these matters the average layman is often vastly deeper and more serious, alas, than the minister of religion itself. The "indifference of the laity," I must believe, is due in large measure to a simple weariness on the part of serious men with the preacher's timid, or silly, practical tampering with religion's sacred offices. It is pertinent that

where there has been honest preaching, simple and abandoned, with nothing concealed or withheld between preacher and people; where there has been no timidity nor sensational clap-trap, but a free, unafraid and unashamed giving of his whole, honest and solemn person in the preacher's weekly meditation before his people; where there has been no apology nor nervous self-defense but simple and straight-forward reflection upon the eternal instincts and passions of life — in these circumstances the layman has always listened gladly. For through the preacher's common words he has felt his own silences somehow become vocal with the soul's natural and eternal harmonies. Brooks, Beecher, Hale, Gladden, Savage — such giants of God have lived and still do live but never confront an indifferent laity.

The instant success of great, yet simple preaching is evidence against the claim that the indifferents, the unconscious materialists, dominate our modern life. The average layman is spiritually modest; he does not easily expose the secret places of his inner life. He is spiritually sensitive; he will not subject the really deep problems of his life to the buffoonery and tomfoolery too often exhibited in the modern pulpit. None the less he is desperately in earnest. Great crowds of his kind are awaiting a voice of prophecy in our modern world — a prophet who shall command that the gates of the church be lifted up, that the portals of the larger Life be thrown open to

admit without condition or apology all those who are now suffering for its atmosphere of freedom and peace and joy.

We need not expect that in the long run this larger and deeper need of the modern mind will be satisfied with the discussion of social and ethical problems now in vogue among many popular preachers. After all the average layman is better able than the average minister to deal with these more practical problems of life. In an hour's reading of some authoritative book or magazine the layman with his background of worldly knowledge will inform himself more genuinely upon questions of social and practical morality than by listening to an inexpert, morning sermon dealing with such matters. A meager week or two of reading and reflection upon the part of the preacher and his sermon is ready! But the inexperience and practical awkwardness of it all shriek at you from every page and paragraph of his labored discourse. With the rare exception of men in the pulpit whose previons experience of life especially entitles them to speak upon "problems of the day" the minister is grotesquely ineffectual when dealing with such questions. All his habits of life and thought, all his instincts, if he be indeed an *instinctive* prophet of the larger Life, unfit him to grasp directly the "affairs" of his laymen. They respect him for *attempting* these matters;— anything were better than the traditional and tire-

some "doctrinal" sermon! But they like him best of all when he is discharging his peculiarly ministerial office: saturating their souls with an atmosphere of mystic Manhood such that their *practical* solutions of the problems of the day will be in fact *ideal*. This is something mystic and intangible, I grant. But it is the great and lasting thing in all apostolic and prophetic preaching. Anything short of this, anything more *practical* than this, however excellent and useful it may be in its way, is not in the province of the preacher. To know practically and in detail the conditions and problems in the life of the layman is hardly the preacher's business. He cannot hope to "win men" by becoming himself a layman. Not by awkward dealing with practical problems remote from his proper instincts and temperament, but by somehow touching each week, simply and solemnly, the things the layman himself in all his spiritual silence, modesty and sensitiveness is thinking on will the minister of a larger Life serve the modern man in his deeper nature.

III

Meanwhile, there are many quiet, unobtrusive ministers over the country who cannot be fairly accused of thus secularizing their pulpits;—a large body of faithful men who, unknown to fame, are yet leading their people along the simple paths of righteousness they and their fathers have trodden. To me there is a certain pathos in the

transparent consecration of these men. They man the pulpits of their fathers and defend their fathers' faith. By the great test of practice that faith has worked well in their cases. It has made them gentler, honester, more generous in their life with their fellows; it has kept their faces toward the Eternal. They make no skilful apologetic and learned defence of these ancestral traditions. Their argument has in it the deeper ring of a mystic conviction. They are simple, sincere, untutored, unspoiled. They are in the direct line of apostolic succession. Their Christian culture belongs by right to those apostolic and early patristic periods before the Christian experience had been spoiled by "Christian Evidences" and "Sacred Oratory."

By right; but the trouble is that there lurks in the minds of these admirably sincere defenders of the fathers' faith a half-suspected confusion; a confusion of their natural, unspoiled impulses of religion with certain of the outgrown dogmas and symbols in which these great human passions once clothed themselves. They retain the prime passions of religion: a sense of the eternal, the joys of divine companionship, the complete subjection of their human life to an eternal law of righteousness; but they confusedly express these deep experiences in terms no longer fitting the present depth and freedom of such great communions between the human and the larger Life.

This confusion of mind among modern church-

goers is very widespread. The thing which attracts and holds them in regular attendance upon services of the church is clearly not the doctrines therein set forth; it must be rather the transparent and refreshing sincerity of the preacher himself upon whose honor they are glad to stake their own eternal lives. He preaches fiction as if it were truth! for to him it is truth, sacred and everlasting. To him and his people your difficulties with this or that dogmatic conception are shallow and impertinent. The deep and pertinent thing, they say, is that the dogmas do work, do fit the life of the world, do sweeten the atmosphere of the home! Even so, these men believe deep of God, eternity, human destiny and the like — things world-wide and race-wide in their value; but they confuse these eternal things in religion with the transient dogmas and symbolic practices of their historic sect.

'The inevitable result of this endeavor to save and honor outworn dogmas under the shadow of religion's eternal truths is a narrowing and shallowing of those eternal values themselves. Thus men of this group I call "confused" believe very practically and deeply in God but only in him as revealed in the Christ. They believe in eternity but only as a region wherein lies the Kingdom of God planned and prepared by his risen Son. They believe in universal salvation but only because every man *must* eventually adopt the "plan" which their peculiar priest or

preacher sets forth as "scriptural." They hold that God's revelation of himself is free and universal but the culmination and final form of that revelation is after all contained within the Christian bible as interpreted by the scholars of their persuasion. And so on in an apparently hopeless and endless confusion of the visible dogmas of human history with the invisible realities of the larger Life.

This confusion of mind and, if I may express a kindly, though frank judgment, this spiritual superficiality is the most conspicuous phenomenon in modern Christian circles. It is all so sincere, in spots so mightily stimulating and helpful! Strong men deliberately pay the price of intellectual confusion for the precious freight of practical goods conveyed to them within the old wrappings of a former faith. But it is all so superficial and misleading! Listen to a few sermons or read a few of the books of the more notable of these sincere apologists of primitive Christianity, these leaders of Christian peoples "back to Christ"! If your mind be alert in such matters you will easily mark the very paragraph and in some instances the very sentence in which the speaker or writer's thought unconsciously turns the corner from the essential to the unessential, from the spontaneous to the dogmatic, from the inner life to its external forms, from the eternal to the transient things of religion. It all aims at the unspoiled experience of apostolic and early

patristic Christianity; it would delve beneath the débris of dogma in order to reclaim Christianity in its primitive and eternal forms.

In the hands of the leading exponents of this primitive, *pragmatic* Christianity, in men trained in the school of the incomparable Ritschl, the mixing of essential with unessential elements is in a high degree expert. They are far subtler than the more naive preachers of the fathers' faith. But the confusion in their cases is nevertheless very real and to my mind very grievous. They commend to men an interpretation of Christian culture in the very highest degree plausible and tempting but which clear-thinking men, it may be of the next generation, will be apt to reject as too unscientific and *unmystic* for their own needs.

For, notwithstanding denials to the contrary, men must see sooner or later that this appeal to primitive Christianity as a practically final form of religious experience does imply that the apostolic and early patristic Christians were *peculiar*, not to say *inspired*, in the inner springs of their religious being. This is of course most vigorously denied by those who defend the Christian religion as "final". They tell us very clearly indeed that by the "final elements" in Christian experience they do not mean anything *peculiar* to Paul or his time nor to the early fathers and their times; that they aim rather to revive in men's minds the *eternal* values in the religion called Christian. In defending their view of the Chris-

tian religion against this charge of historic limitation they have even gone to the extreme of declaring that if Jesus of Nazareth, the source of *historic* Christianity, had never lived, the things they affirm as final in Christianity would still be binding upon men!

But at this juncture the clear-minded man always rises to a point of enquiry; nor can he be silenced by the decision that his questions are mere "quibbles". He asks, for example, in what conceivable sense this "pragmatic" Christianity is a *revival* of primitive Christianity. "Really now," he says, "if you emasculate historic Christianity, depleting it not merely of its later dogmas — every one in these days seems glad to let *them* go! — but also of all its recorded maxims of conduct and even of its very founder, is this not tantamount to saying that these eternal values are not in any sense whatsoever Christian? Are not these values genuinely eternal? Are they not the birth-right of every age and of every race? Are they not more properly conceived as mystic than as historic? Would there be by this test any difference between the Christian's *essential* Christianity and, say, the Buddhist's *essential* Buddhism?"

I have some friends of the Hindu race, men of exquisite culture and character. I used to say playfully that they were better "Christians" than I. Would I not have spoken more clearly and genuinely had I said "They are better *men*

than I, living closer to the eternal, expressing better the larger Life, imitating more fully that mystic Man envisaged by all religions as eternally real beyond the confines of historic humanity"? When this complete transcendence by religious experience of all actual or possible historic persons or races, forms or dogmas, is clearly understood the group of minds I have called "confused" will cease to prosper and multiply their kind.

"But" I have friends who say "all this is beating the air. We've got to call this experience of religion *something*. We who are Christian by birth and heritage call it by the name which is familiar to us. Let Buddhist, Brahman, Mohammedan and the rest denote *the same thing*, if you will, by terms which are congenital with *them*. Let's not quibble over words."

But this refusal to "quibble" may do a vast deal of mischief in the world. *Practical* mischief, too,— if clear and genuine open-mindedness is to be the test. Say what you please to the contrary, the fact is that if you insist upon calling your experience "Christian" then you remove from your inner circle your friend of another race, or perhaps your friend of a broader scientific and philosophic culture whose religious experiences simply have not the historic origin nor the historic simplicity of the experience you insist upon calling "Christian".

It is all a matter of clearness, you see. And when you consider that in another generation or

two all civilized races by virtue of international wars, councils, peace conferences and the like will have become in matters of secular and ethical culture genuinely acquainted with each other; and that the average man by virtue of education in the cosmos-wide matters of science and philosophy will have broadened his horizon out beyond the historic places and times of humankind — when you consider this perhaps remote but nonetheless approaching state of human society your inability at this time to dispense with historic terms becomes a really practical impediment in the way of human comity. The Christian religion, as *Christian*, is historic, ethnic. The time is perhaps remote but it approaches when Christianity, *as historic*, will be classed among "religions of the past". There will be then a larger race and a more mystic religious experience, an experience of invisible Manhood companioning all the lives of all men. What men of that day will call their religion God only knows. Let us hope it will be so awful and so practically mystic that *they will not call it anything*. Perhaps its God will be that "nameless" God one encounters here or there in every great religion, that invisible Man one always fronts sooner or later in some hidden path of his own inner life.

It has already come to pass that one feature of primitive Christianity, long regarded as "final", is seen to have been based upon a confusion of the historic with the eternal in religion.

I refer to the alleged experience of the Christ and God as one. It is trying for us of the modern mind to enter into the genius and meaning of this unconscious confusion at the source of Christian experience. Back of us are some centuries of "trinitarian" controversy. The ideas of God and the Christ lie so adjacent in the mind of the primitive Christian as to be practically, genuinely indistinguishable: to him God and Christ stood for no disparity of divine experience; they were felt as practically, genuinely "one". It is as if in the beginning the spirit of Jesus had completely invaded the minds of his followers, transpiercing them with a thought of himself just like his own experience of himself and the Father as one. But in our minds, whether for better or for worse, these two ideas are sundered: the idea of God, alas! has come to stand for all that is mighty, majestic, austere and awful in life; the idea of Christ for all that is friendly, forgiving and sympathetic. The two experiences once well-nigh identical — the experience of Christ shading mystically and imperceptibly into the presence of God — cannot naturally be brought together and confused in the modern mind.

And yet this is the express aim of certain modern Christian pragmatists: to reclaim this early experience of God and the Christ as one. Their argument is practical, as they see it. Ritschl somewhere says "The deity of Jesus is a value-

judgment": this early confusion of Jesus and God is valid so long as it works; it is true *now* as then because through this *Christing* of God men are brought into living touch with the otherwise ineffable being of God;—by Christing God and *in no other way.* Christ is the sole practical point of contact between the human and the divine. All your logical, scientific and philosophic difficulties, says Ritschl once more, fail to enter that supernal world, that Kingdom of God, that inner life of the spirit where Christ does actually work as God.

It is enormously plausible, this attempt to restore in the modern mind the primitive experience of Christ and God as one. But it is confusing! It really does *not* work in the type of mind I call "modern". Its working depends upon the confusion being in his case as unconscious as it was in the primitive experience itself. But today men's condition of mind in many instances is such that the confusion is *consciously* felt. The modern man, moderately well-read as he is in popular philosophy and above all in popular science, means by "God" a heaven-wide energy of being. He has learned something of the incomparable quantities and qualities of That he now calls God. To him Christ, even granting him to be the type of the divine in the human, is felt not as one with but as at the opposite pole from This he now calls God.

The difficulty at this point is beginning to be

felt by the clearer minded of those who are now celebrating the Christ as a practical force in modern life. To meet the difficulty they have originated — or rather *revived* — a conception of the Christ as "mystic" or "cosmic." *That* Christ, they say, is not the historic Jesus nor the Messiah of Jewish expectation: as *cosmic* he existed in the beginning; he is "wisdom," coeternal with the Father, the eternal Son of God and Companion of man, of equal power with God. As cosmic Christ *is* the God of the modern mind only with an added dimension of practical understanding and love.

But then why not call the cosmic Christ "God"? Why, once more, this reprehensible process of confusion between an historic term and an eternal meaning? Christ thus becomes genuinely universal and mystical. This Christ, this God of mystic oneness can by the modern mind no longer be confused, except consciously and dishonorably, with the Jesus *or even the God of historic Christianity*. He is rather the One of the ages; the unseen, unknowable, undefinable, incomparable source of all divine being; the Presence in conscious science and philosophy; the invisible Companion of all human life; the Eternal of the modern mind.

Ritschl says that the "deity of Jesus is a value-judgment": it works well to confuse Jesus with God. The modern man, equally pragmatic, says "The deity of *man*, or the Manhood of

deity is a value-judgment!": it works well to assume an invisible divinity present in every man, an invisible humanity present in every god. Thus without confusion the modern mind does indeed gain all that has eternal value in the Christ-idea and infinitely more; for in its view every man is a potential god, every God a cosmic Man.

## IV

The "modern" mind, then, as I see it, is by no means the *average* mind. Most of the men one encounters in a day's journey belong to the group of minds we have been considering as "confused": they would pour the new wine of modern culture into the old bottles of Judaic ethics and Christian religion. By "modern" I mean the rare and sincerely open mind, the man conscious of himself in relation to a full modern culture, unbound by historic forms and terms; his openness is natural and unaffected; with his whole person and without turning back he faces the prospect ahead; his is a spirit of iron constitution, radical to the very marrow, finding ravishing joy in trying to the heights and valleys of being the wings of his spirit, apt to reject as artificial and restrictive the familiar terms and dogmas of the historic church, eager to follow in the pursuits of science and philosophy — in a word, unafraid, unashamed and *open* minded.

To follow the movements of this unaffectedly open minded man within the last half century is

indeed a stimulating and uplifting exercise. Of course he has had in his train a motley following of noisy cynics and sceptics. But he himself is a nobleman — clean and pure in his mind; eager and sensitive in his soul; searching always for a positive and honorable experience of things eternal; wanting and ready at every turn in the spirit path to stand silent and conquered in the presence of That he may yet call God.

On his honor the modern man cannot accept any historic religion as final, or even as expressing *essentially* the height and depth of his modern insight. In his view all institutional religion is heavy, saturated with past forms, myths, untruths, a dead weight; its terms somehow are restrictive and misleading, apt to damn all spontaneity of spirit. In any atmosphere of concession to this or that particular form of religious experience our man of iron and radical constitution cannot abide; he feels oppressed somehow by suggestions and meanings he cannot honorably favor.

All this merely reports a bald fact. It boots not so far as the fact is concerned, to accuse this modern mind of being over-radical; or to complain that such a man is in fact *ignorant* of the eternal values rescued by "criticism" from the dogma-wreckage of historic Christianity. As I have already suggested, these "eternal" elements, in so far as they are genuinely that, are not historic at all but mystically, invisibly universal.

To hold them, thus final, as peculiarly creditable to any historic person or age is once more "confusing".

But one need not repeat the argument now. The fact suffices: the modern man by temperament faces ahead with his whole person. He is a bad historian and critic, if you please; an unloyal child of a long line of culture that bred him "modern." In all this he is no doubt eccentric and radical; but he is *true* to the marrow. He faces forward bearing in his manner and spirit a wealth of past religious experience; but claiming all this heritage unconsciously, just as a child unwittingly passes on through his person the subtle breath of his fathers.

Is he then a Christian? My readers will recall two or three notable heresy trials in which this question was asked of certain offenders who were then in process of becoming "modern". These men invariably replied that they were beyond doubt Christian, or even "Baptist", "Presbyterian" or *Gott weiss was sonst!* in the "final", "primitive", "permanent" sense though perhaps not in the "sectarian", "transient", "institutional" meaning of the word. Now it is hard for the man of the modern mind to understand these subtle defenses of the modern heretic and perhaps even harder for him to be patient withal. It is so painfully uncertain what these primitive religions and sects were; and, anyway, so certain that whatever they were they *are* not

now, nor are likely ever to become again! It is too much to expect that any Christian sect or even Christianity itself can ever wholly cancel and disown as spurious the hard and dogmatic features accumulated during the centuries of their past. It is not to be expected and for that matter not to be desired that time will turn backward and make a man a child again even for a night; not to be expected nor desired that the human life will in any important respect return to the childhood of the race. But just *that* is substantially what the defense the modern heretic involves and recommends! — the grafting of modern culture upon the apostolic and early patristic stem of Christian culture.

The man I call modern, whether for good or ill, is a man without a conscious history; he is without any religious traditions; like John Stuart Mill, as he describes himself somewhere in his autobiography: whereas most men are in the position of painfully breaking through the shell of religious tradition he is in the peculiar, free-born position of never having had any religion at all; of facing reality with perfect and unconscious freedom; with no chip of the past hampering even the subconscious parts of his soul. He is a religious outcast who cannot be brought to trial; making no official professions he is not open to question by religion's professors. He has a profound respect, perhaps a sincerer appreciation, for the deeper things of that religion called Chris-

tian; but I imagine that if brought to trial and asked if he were a Christian he would promptly reply "No!" Nor would he be likely to prostrate his high spirit by explaining his answer before men capable of asking such a question.

In all this our modern man has endured much hardship and contumely, many weary hours of spiritual loneliness. He has imagined himself cut off from religion not alone in its historic forms but in its deeper contacts as well. Failing to connect with any of the visible gods of human history, deploring all these superstitions of the past, he has missed the invisible, eternal realities. He has in many instances resorted to humanitarian morality and in its gracious atmosphere has found rest for his larger soul. He has fallen back upon *himself* as a partial and yet faithful expression of a future, ideal humanity. With no sense of divine companionship, with no eternal prospect or perspective for his own person, he has yet sought to work out a happy destiny for his fellows-to-be. He has in hot passion conceived a "religion of humanity". He has become to the core humanitarian in his life's processes. )

In this he has, as it seems to me, found a practical ideal incomparably superior to the dogmas of fear and false faith too often identified with religion. He has saved as it were the disembodied soul of religion, the soul of goodness and love in all things human. Such a man is trustworthy enough; he is a much sweeter and

friendlier companion in life's way than the commonplace bigot in religion. And yet somehow he makes you sad when you join him on his way. He lives in such loneliness of spirit! His humanitarian heroism has in it the nobility of tears, the tenderness of a silent and constant sorrow. His Great Father is dead! Standing now alone he would himself vouch for humanity; he would in his small measure restore something of the infinite righteousness and love lost in the death of humanity's God. The moral law after all is man-made and man-maintained, he says. Has it no sanction of any higher "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness"? Very well then acquit yourselves like men; yea, like very gods! Is the law of love likewise a purely human institution? Very good then; guard all the more jealously the great institution of love and humanity builded by the faithfulness and purity of these finer men, risen from the beasts of the field. "The gods are all dead"? Then put a *Man* on their high throne. Poor, insane Nietzsche, *fugitivus errans*, was after all the perfect prophet of this sadder, more heroic humanitarianism. "The gods are all dead; but, behold, there comes a Man!"

I would not presume to address these modern minds, did I not belong to their fraternity. With my brethren of the spontaneous, open mind in view I have on some occasions spoken the words now brought together in this little volume. It is

as it were a personal confession. It has one sole aim: to show, if it may, how a man of radical constitution may yet regain an honorable and positive experience of things eternal; how he may fully cultivate within his modern mind that sense of eternal, moral companionship which is indeed the invisible genius of every "religion of humanity". Take seriously that exquisite structure you call "Man", my friend; give your inner vision of him full play; really *believe* in him; spread his mystic humanity over and beyond the stars up there! Add to him an infinite dimension of human things like love and patience and hopefulness! And you will behold That I call "God". This is what your religion of humanity unconsciously means, is it not, brethren of the humane mind? God! too unseen to be dogmatically defined or in his fulness revealed in time; yet too human to be comprehended in the deliberate language of science and philosophy? God, a Man, cosmic and yet friendly? an universal energy unconscious in stones and stars yet conscious in men? divine yet human? God yet a Man?

## V

Still, as I pen these lines, my spirit is checked by a difficulty which always disturbs the surface of one's deeper experience of his own mystic humanity. It is a difficulty of method and temperament. The more hard-headed and dispassionate of these religionists of humanity will un-

derstand and applaud this vision of the God-Man. "But," they will everlastingly remind you, "it is no vision of what *is* but rather of what *is to be*. If in your defense of God as human you declare not merely *what* God would be in such a case but *that* he is, you are no better than the veriest fanatic and dreamer in religion. What *is* religion indeed but just this dogmatic or, if you will, mystic creating of gods in the image of men? Some day you too will follow your own God-Man brokenheartedly to that vast cemetery of the soul where rest men's dream-gods surrounded by all the sacred relics of the past."

Once I spoke of this invisible humanity of God in the hearing of Felix Adler. In an address following my own he approved what he called the "perfect music" in this service of elevation, this exalting of a purely ideal Man to a level of strict reality. But, he complained, it is not the ideality but just this *reality* of God that men are questioning in these days. A while ago open-minded men were saying "God is too *bad* to be true"; now they are beginning to feel that God is too good to be true!

Felix Adler's difficulty, as I understood him, is typical; and I am frank to say, it is insuperable in the mind which follows in all matters the method of brute fact. "What" modern men are fond of asking "is reality *in fact?*" "Observe and then report what you see!" they say.

"Do the heavens *in fact* declare the glory of God? Are things, *as seen*, base or ideal? Does the account of reality, *as it appears*, suggest eternal perfection or blind force as its core and source?"

This method has always made short work of the affairs of religion. Is God obviously real? does he appear upon the surfaces of things? Well, no. Do the facts justify the soul in its eternal hope? No again, if you test the soul as it appears in some diseased state, say, in idiocy or senility; or if you judge by the almost tangible silence of the grave. Is the Power of things as they are also a God of things as they ought to be? No; positive pain and ill has always opposed its spectral being in the way of every fancy "solution" of this problem of evil. And so on through a very dreary series of hard-headed and hard-hearted negations.

For many years the situation was no better than this. On the one side there was the idealist displaying his tiresome, impractical wares in the light of the eternal; by arguments *ad hominem* persuading men to faith in an ideal state of things they practically knew to be unreal. On the other side the realist confounding the mild-eyed and simple-minded idealist across the way with a counter display of hideous facts, brute-forces, monstrosities, evils on all sides. Idiocy, degeneracy, moral imbecility, the wholesale slaughter of innocents, born and yet unborn, and a thousand hor-

rifying features wherein the experiment of man-making has most miserably failed.

This opposition of temperament between idealist and realist is familiar enough. Each in his own way is a dogmatist; each stubbornly follows the method of fact. The one dogmatizes about the surface aspects, the other about the alleged "absolute" aspects of being. The dogma of the absolute idealist is that at its *core* the world of facts is ideal; the dogma of the realist is that there is no core of being at all, but things *are* just what they *seem*. To the one life is deeply rational and good; to the other it is throughout irrational and bad.

But lately a new method has interposed between these arch-temperaments, a method called "pragmatism." In its spirit it disagrees with the dogmatism of idealist and realist alike. It is by no means absolute in its emphasis of ideal things; yet it faces the appearance of things with the presumption that to act as if things were better than they really are would perhaps bring about a better actual state of affairs. In so far the pragmatist, as I see him, is an idealist: he believes beyond the facts. Again, though he is not abject in his vision of things as they are, yet he sees enough of horror in being to stiffen the souls of men and startle them out of the silly optimism of the absolute idealist. In so far he, as I see him, is a realist: he believes within the facts.

In all this the new method is in truth the method of life. In all living we assume things to be better, or, alas, worse [1] than they may actually be; and somehow in the nature of things as they are the inner assumption does perceptibly alter for better or worse the bare face of the world. This pragmatist then does in truth ring reality much more genuinely than either the realist with his clumsy or the idealist with his vague pulls upon the sources of being.[2]

Now it is the character of religion to *pull* upon being, to draw substance out of the hidden and unreachable abysses of being, to create gods after the manner of man. The modern mind needs to be reminded of this peculiar property, this creative virtue of religious enthusiasm. Its first step (and an indispensable step too, if it would profess religion of any sort, even a modest religion of humanity) must be away from the rugged realism of its method of brute fact toward a franker and fluenter enthusiasm for the imponderable and

[1] The whole universe, you remember, *became* "a Humbug to those Apes who thought it one!" Just re-read Book III, Chap. III of Carlyle's "Past and Present," and *see*.

[2] ElseWhere I have outlined a philosophy called "cosmic humanism," which, I imagine, will in some wise be the technical outcome of this fresh method. If there be any of my readers in whose mind this little volume appears rather thin and frothy in its enthusiasm for an unformed humanity, an invisible God-Man, I may perhaps refer him to the appendix where I have reprinted two of the articles in question.

immeasurable facts of being. (Thus, if he profess a religion of humanity, let him after the manner of the fanatic declare that *there are no facts except Man.* Let him grapple with being and bend all its energy along with his own human powers toward this thing he calls "Humanity". Whenever he looks upon the stars let him see "Man" imaged there in the depths of being. Whenever he visits the plague-spots among men let him divest the moral imbecile he sees there of all his filthy rags and display underneath, once more, a "Man". All this will profoundly change the face of the heavens and of the earth. And the religion of humanity's blood-sweating faith will not have been vain. For, doubt it not! there is a region of being — what the philosophers call the Unknowable — where the facts are undetermined, where your poor human "say so" counts tremendously! It is the region of "Man" and "God", the habitation of the "God-Man" of the modern mind.

'When the modern mind has adopted, wholeheartedly and whole-souledly, this method of life it will not ask "*Is* God" but "*Shall* he be?" not "*What* is God?" but "What do we *want* him to be?", not "What are the *probabilities* in his case?" but "How much in our own human case are we willing *to do*, how much to *risk* in the interest of God's possible being?" not "What may we reasonably *expect from* the alleged God of the ages, *if* he be?" but "What for God's

sake can we practically *contribute* to his enterprises among us men, granting *that* he is?"

Well then what does the modern mind *want* God to be? What are a man's lasting wants, his eternal needs? That's the question. Then, dare to convert these eternal wants into resolute pulls upon being's sources! Enter the free region of the Unknowable and stake out your claims! Assert your right to find in God what your human life most profoundly needs! Stake your life upon the trustworthiness of the eternal! Hold fast to that! Demand what you need of that! Believe in that! And, as God lives, that will come true in the end! This is the method.

## VI

As I move among men searching their souls and mine for some one thing which would cover with its principles and privileges all the multiplex needs of our human lives I come to dwell more and more on men's want of moral companionship in their lives. A present companion here on earth, a moral Presence, this is what men *want* God to be. This is what he shall be in the invisible depths of being where things are not what they seem but what they ought to be. Let the surface facts of the world appear as they may, the modern mind must risk its all, must contribute its last drop of energy in promoting this great unknown God, this silent Companion of men, this present Friend of humanity.

As it stands, "moral companionship" like any other catch-phrase is a somewhat vague formula. But if we will examine in detail the concrete values of such a belief, I think we shall find them meeting point by point all the deeper wants of the modern mind.

## VII

For one thing, God, were he real not merely as an unconscious power round about, above and within us but as a conscious energy companioning men in their moral struggles, would fill with superlative joy all the places of moral solitude in the world.

We have marked the moral loneliness of the modern man. Lacking all sense of overbrooding companionship, finding in the Unknown no evident moral friendliness, wanting in his own life all eternal perspective, the modern man still labors heroically for a humanity yet to be. He is a religionist of humanity, the most exquisite example, so far, of all nature's finer products. In him the "struggle for the life of others" has come to full fruition. He yields his energies completely to the life of the whole he calls "humanity". All *his* wants, all *his* needs, center in a future Man. For him he labors, though in the joy and perfection of that ideal Man-to-be he shall have no conscious part. This is his religion; the service of Man its only, holy office; his God is, *shall* be this Man-to-be.

(It is not with the sects and religions of the past but with this religion of humanity that the modern mind has got to reckon. In point of nobility and in its acual outlook this religion of humanity is in a thousand ways suited to the wants of the open-minded man: it is scientific, sincere, clear-headed and above all *humane*. It is, moreover, productive: it develops on earth the highest imaginable type of moral manhood.) These religionists of humanity (I make no exception) are the best men on earth to-day, the most heroic yet the freest from mock heroics, the purest yet the least pharisaic, the saddest yet the least querulous among the men of their day and generation.

(What, somewhat more precisely is the vision of this religionist of humanity? It is a vision of the human life as a continuous generation of moral personalities but in which no one man has any personal endurance. The man of to-day must serve the man of to-morrow by indirect measures.' If he be a father, he must aim to produce in his own children a higher and stronger type than himself. If he be childless he may yet serve humanity though in a subtler and less direct way: he may seek to join the "choir invisible" of those whose deeds of goodness continue even after their own death to broaden and deepen the continuing stream of living, human souls. His ideal is indeed mystical: he has and holds this vision of a future perfected and joyful Son of

Man. Only it is a sad vision, a lonely heroism! The religionist of humanity by all means promotes a great enterprise of Man-making in the world, but is yet in himself sad and lonely. He sees men of incomparable goodness dying on all sides with no great Companion to close their eyes in peace and with no power on earth to make good the dead loss of their kindly and beneficent souls. The way is weary and the prospect promises nothing to him and his fellows of the onward life. Yet he does not complain and whine and whimper. With quiet and very solemn dignity this merciful religionist of humanity will tell you that the ultimate Man of his mystic vision is worth the myriads of human souls sacrificed in his making.

Yes, that Man *is* worth all the soul-stuff that is going into his beatific being. Any one of us, if he too be a nobleman of this larger Life of humanity, would gladly add his mite of being to the God-Man who is yet to be on this earth. What assurance, then, have we that this ideal Man will some day come to be in very truth? By what right indeed save that of believing and demanding, of staking our lives fanatically upon this Son of Man! The religionist of humanity says "This Man-to-be *shall* be. It matters not how the facts of brute-being may seem, this superlative Man *shall* come to be, *shall* triumph over the grave abysses of being, *shall* come out of the Unknowable onto the ground of an eternal

reality, *shall* prevail and preside over all the powers of the world, informing all things and all men with his own noble impulses and passions of Manhood."

(Now this is *in its effect* just what I mean by the God of the modern mind: a power of humanity that shall triumph in the ends of life; a humane Life that is becoming ever more conscious of its inner energies and purposes, a world-energy that is now taking hold with men and companioning them along their ways of life. In their effects, I say, these two views are practically identical. A man who believed in either would be a good neighbor, companion and citizen. He would spend his whole being toward an ideal humanity.)

What then is the precise difference between these views? Why not urge a "religion of humanity" as suited to the needs of the whole, modern mind?

The difference is not easy to express precisely, though as it feels in my mind it is not inconsiderable. Between the humanitarian religion and that I am urging in this little volume, be it understood, *there is no least clashing of ideals.* They differ rather in the intensity of their faith. The Man-God is ideal with both. But in the one case this ideal is *going to be* real in some remote age and clime; in the other it *is* real here and now. The Man-ideal which the humanitarian hopes *to have* realized some day my modern man of ideal yet practical religion feels to be already

invisibly and mystically real. What the humanitarian hopes *man will become* his brother of intenser faith says *God now is.* The companionship which the one has only in *imagination* with a man of a remote future the other by *faith* has already with a Man of the present. The one hopes to claim and control the energies of the world to serve the needs of this future Man; the other somehow feels the vast energies of being as already charged with human freight, as already companioning and working with the present man. The humanitarian says "I am a man and nothing human is foreign to me"; his brother of a larger faith dares to affirm that God is a Man and nothing human is foreign to him.

How to justify the larger, intenser faith? This is perhaps the gravest problem we shall need to face in our treatment of the case of religion in its relation to the modern mind. For I make no doubt that the modern man is realistic rather than idealistic in his apparent tendencies and motives. As we saw a while ago, so much of mummery and dogmatism has been foisted upon him under the guise of a religious idealism that the modern man has become thoroughly suspicious of the whole method and business of religion. There is even a certain rudeness in the joy with which he has broken away from these older fetters, a certain unnecessary heroism in his espousal of the individual man as godless and mortal in the world.

Unnecessary, because he himself in his way is just as much an idealist as the man sunken in "dogmatic slumber". His future Man is ideal. In working for the Man-to-be the humanitarian, just like any other idealist, is believing beyond the facts. (And now, a little more of this "believing beyond the facts" and he will have a God fitted to the modern mind — a moral consciousness growing in the lives of men; a human Friend already come to be and now adding all his universal powers and practical wisdom to the ends of men, himself a real Man, the realization in substance of the ideal Man of a humanitarian religion.

(The first great want of the modern man would thus be realized by a simple application and intensification of his natural humanitarian instincts and passions. In the place then of his present loneliness would appear a mystic Companion, adding to man's poor powers something of a God's immense energies, to man's laboring, sensuons intelligence something of divine insight, to man's being, ever tottering on the verge of the grave, something of a God's confidence in the reality of things unseen yet hoped for, something of divine determination to draw from the unknown sources of being all that a human soul most deeply needs. All these divine joys are gifts to men out of the heart of the great moral Companion I call God.

## VIII

A vast deal is implied then in this conviction of God as a *moral* Companion. The modern man, as I see him, is full of a deep moral *enthusiasm*. He is overflowing with philanthropic impulses, rich in humanitarian ideals, conscious of a great humane Man-energy stirring in his invisible depths, amazed and disgusted with any creature in human form who sells this deeper soul of his humanity for that which is shallow and base and mean.

A goodly wave of this moral enthusiasm swept over the country a few years ago and left its high mark in several of our larger cities. With what splendid indignation did the reformers assault the strongholds of vice in these municipalities, exposing graft, prosecuting the lawless, cleansing the halls wherein the people's rights and liberties should be held sacred! It was not child's play either. Men's lives were in danger. Many were threatened, several desperately wounded, and at least one of this resolute company of moral enthusiasts, a man down in Texas, lost his life in the endeavor to bring his fellows to their moral senses. It was all fine, dangerous, heroic! A man's blood still tingles with the fervor of the onslaught. It was a sublime event in American history, nothing less. In this I would want to be counted wholly and unreservedly on the side of these moral "cranks", as they were not in-

frequently styled. Who indeed would not gladly lose his good right arm, his own life, even his reputation for "practical common sense" and "worldly judgment" forsooth! rather than remit one jot or tittle of those finer and, if you please, impractical things which deepen and dignify the powers of manhood in the world!

I will not be misunderstood then, if I say that there was in this great wave of moral enthusiasm a certain vagueness and vacuity. Day before yesterday I talked with one of these moral enthusiasts, a friend of many years standing. Three of the men he convicted of fraud in high places are now in the State's penitentiary. Again and again his life was in jeopardy during the heat of his campaign for decency and righteousness. I asked my friend what was the ground of his moral enthusiasm. What was his *religion?* He replied that many years ago he had given up thinking on such matters. In the years of his young manhood he sought out the church which made the least possible creedal demands upon him ("asked the fewest questions," as he put it), joined that church, and since then has shut all such matters out of his mind! It would seem that in his extraordinary and persistent fight for decency and purity in civic affairs he has drawn wholly upon his own resources with no sense of moral companionship. His is a moral not a divine enthusiasm.

My friend is still continuing the battle. At

this moment he is laboring night and day to obstruct and destroy a corrupt, political machine operating in his city. But in point of persistency and efficiency his case, one must feel, is exceptional. For the most part there is already a remarkable "letting up", a noticeable relaxing of the energy with which only a few years ago this mighty project of municipal moralization was launched. The explanation of this weakening of moral energy is to be found, I think, in the vagueness and vacuity of the modern mind's moral convictions. Men's moral passion was very hot but it didn't burn deep. Men had not the *vision* of the things they did as concerning the world's well-being to its very core, as furthering a larger Life, a mystic humanity, a God-Man, in the utmost deeps of his being. They wrought nobly and valiantly, but all in the interest of the *immediate* law and order. *That* accomplished, the vision seems to have disappeared. Soon men will be seen returning to their grafting places and the entire task of moral regeneration will need to be gone over again. This at all events is the judgment of so-called "practical" men. "After all," they are saying, "men are very much alike the world over. You may raise the level of human decency and righteousness to-day, but to-morrow will find men on yesterday's low level again. It is at best a tedious thankless, hopeless business, this moral Quixotism. It requires leader after leader. One great moral

genius must be followed by another only a few years or perhaps generations later in order that men may be saved from yielding to their natural moral inertia and drifting back once more into the dark and dirty ditches of their common being."

This diagnosis with its somewhat gloomy prognosis is in the main a correct estimate of the moral weakness of our modern life. But the remedy for this moral anæmia is not to be found, I insist, in any such temporizing tonics as are generally prescribed, each generation being left to stimulate its own moral energies, and so on age after age. All this is too vague and vacuous. It is not *visionary* enough, not tonic enough. "Leader after leader, age after age" you say? Well, suppose we allow that mankind has had in all times and places of its history a solitary and faithful Leader, a very God among men, a God-Man, no less; whose courage and enthusiasm run unbrokenly through human history; whose larger Life is the source of all moral heroisms; whose superabundant energy supplies men at all times and in all places of right endeavor; whose currents of being, flowing deeply and broadly in the way of righteousness, catch up and carry forward every drop of human energy spent in its same direction of increasing goodness? In this moral Presence men's vague and vacuous enthusiasms would take on the fulness and clearness of an eternal vision, would gain the dignity of

a world-wide, age-long Life of becoming goodness. Generosity, honesty, kindliness, lawfulness, all these now somewhat fancy graces of human life would in such a warming Presence push their tender roots down to the very rock-bottom of the world's being.

This is what the modern man *wants* God to be. This is what any man gains, practically and certainly, who risks his everlasting life upon this belief in God as an increasing power of righteousness, a humane Presence ever watchful in the regions of human being, a moral Companion among men. The thing he yesterday did vaguely for man's sake he now does clearly for God's sake! The whole prospect of future things becomes transfigured in the light of this eternal Companion of men in their ways of life.

IX

The supremest gift of this man-wanted God is this *Companionship* with his humane Life. In the deep matters of morality, for example. The modern man, I was just saying, is vague and vacuous in his moral enthusiasm. This because his moral endeavors seem to him lacking in any eternal duration or value. His is a moral but not a divine enthusiasm. It is morality untouched by emotion and wanting any lasting sanction. In all this we may observe but another symptom of the modern mind's unconscious revolt from the too dogmatic and idealistic beliefs of the

past. For a too dogmatic idealism tends always to estrange the Ideal from the Real. In the view of absolute idealism God and his law are inwardly perfect. As transcendent perfection God *has been* in eternity what man *has got to become* in time. In all this God is severely remote from the human life, his judgments are necessary and automatic. He is in the strictest sense *un*moral, having nothing in common with our processes of moral struggle. As one of my students recently said, "Ask such a God 'How do you do' and he will answer 'I don't do, *I am!*'"

'In the view of the modern mind, as it now stands in the world, there exists, whether consciously or not, a grievous remoteness of its idea of God from its idea of human righteousness. God is immense, superlative, incomparable; his glory is declared in the heavens; he is of old and high degree in eternity; his laws are hard and fast; he is a great energy whose deepest characteristic is a "taste for engineering": in their regular courses he holds the stars and planets, with only here and there a comet let loose! He works in men also by the same steady, unconcerned, mechanical forces he expends in the spheres above their heads. He is all this and all that, anything and everything save human and personal. Between him and us there is no point of conscious, friendly contact. We are all impatience, eager, strenuous, struggling, falling and rising; he is steady, stolid, determined, austere.

Our life at its best is expressed in the simple virtues of the hearth-stone; his best manifested in the creaking, complicated motions of the celestial spheres. In a single word he is a foreigner on the shores of our human life, his perfection is alien to our imperfection, his superhuman cannot touch our human lives.

Now I think the world has had enough and to spare of this tiresome emphasis and iteration of God's perfections and infinitudes. That God is immense, that he is powerful and lawful, that his being fills all space and informs all times — all these heavy claims for God the modern mind finds credible. *Of course* God is all that. But "all that" somehow removes him from the precincts of human life. I am told by a former colleague that the modern Mohammedan will frequently curse in the name of "Allah" but never in the name of one of the Saints! Allah is unearthly, superhuman, *remote*. The saints are earthly, human, *present*.

'Religion' if it would satisfy the genuine, spiritual hunger of the modern man, must dwell more and more upon those parts of God's being wherein his character is not thus unearthly and "infinite" but wherein he is in the deepest, intensest and noblest sense human and "finite". Not the *being* of God — of course that is infinite! — but the *character* of God it is that concerns men deeply and practically in these latter days. There was a day, we may suppose, though I con-

fess I doubt it, in the life of humanity when the human character depended upon this ponderous belief in God's absolute and invisible perfection. But now at any rate that day is gone. The man of to-day, the man of iron constitution and yet broken heart, has little need to be told of God's awful perfection, his absolute character. He has desperate need to be told and reassured of God's humaneness of being. Once more, not what God transcendently *is* but what men humanly *want* him to be is the supreme test of that divine being, that larger Life on which we men must sooner or later stake our human lives.

What, let us ask then, must be the character of the larger Life in those times and places of its being in which it partakes literally of the human life? when it shares quiveringly in all men's labors and pains, sorrows and tragedies, successes and failures, graces and sins? In this the larger Life is just what the modern man *wants* God to be — the mysterious Companion of his daily life, the invisible realization of all he hopes to be, the ideal Man of his future humanity. God in such a view retains his physical infinitudes: his energy still fills all space and time. But to these harsher infinitudes the modern mind wants its God to add the tenderer infinitudes of a conscious concern with its human life: *infinite patience, hopefulness, sinlessness; infinite moral action, infinite companionship in all things human* — this is what we need and want and mean by God's infinity! This

is what God must and will and shall be! At this human call the God of the immensities comes down to earth, enters friendlily, companionably into the region of our human passions. He is no longer remote and unearthly. Blaspheme not! God, as he lives among men, is in strictest truth the present Saint of human life.

In these human parts of his nature God companions men even in ways of sin and evil. Evil, as God lives, is not "good in the making", not just a partial phase of an eternal perfection, not something wholly unreal in the view of an absolute intelligence. It is real and positive; of such horrible proportion in the human life that the divine struggle against its devastating and death-dealing breath is in principle and in fact uncertain! Except the battle be real to men and Gods, there is no glory in the victory.

(The humaner religions, the religions of humanity, have always solemnly and joyfully maintained this sense of divine Companionship; they have believed literally that for God as for men sin is horribly positive; they have found consolation in a God tempted even as men are; they have taught men that their uncleanness counts against God; that the coldness of their death in sin does lower the temperature of the divine life, really reduces God's chances of victory over these powers of evil in the making of humanity. These humane religions have taught that in sadness and pain, in joy and pity, in hope and love — in all these

qualities the great God, just like a man, is softened and humanized in his life. The failure of a human life here or there is just so far the failure of God. The complete and miserable death in sin of a whole humanity would be the complete and miserable death of God! Beside this vast grave of a dead humanity even the great patient and hopeful soul of God would falter and die — would die of a broken heart! Even so does God live and move and have his being in the spirits of men.

Companionship! Fellowship with God! That is what the modern man wants and must somehow secure out of the invisible depths of God's great unknown being.) The absolute power and goodness of God, the inviolability of the moral law — all this the modern man has horizon enough to take for granted. (What he wants to know is whether God and the law are *humanly* divine, *divinely* human. He needs to know that God's goodness, however trustworthy, is yet like his own an achievement, that God's love, however free, is no necessary gift of an unconscious beneficence but is like his own a passionate and spontaneous impulse out of an inwardly and consciously affectionate Soul of goodness.)

x

Thus we may return at last to the practical level on which our discussion began. Religion and the modern mind! If I am right in my

analysis of the mystic needs of the modern mind in matters religious, then, once more, we may mark the inadequacy of the customary restoratives of religion. The man who desperately needs God as a moral companion is not likely to endure the noise and clatter of the *sensational* preacher. He is not likely to be permanently satisfied with the "sociological" discourses of the *practical* preacher. He is certain to reprehend the confusion of his mystic experience of God as endlessly human with that revelation of him in a single person or race or sect which is urged as "final" by the *apologetic* preacher.

The modern man needs a new prophet who shall reveal the mystic humanity of God; a prophet of the universal human life and righteousness of God. He will bring close to man a God whose humane spirit has lived and grown through practically infinite time and over practically infinite space; a spirit which age after age in constant hopefulness and patience has guided the very stars to serve the spirits of men; a God-Man who through the ages has achieved a goodness, has developed a hopefulness which can never-more give up its experiment of love among men, so long as one, solitary soul continues to live in right affectionate relation with his invisibly human Life; a great moral Companion, living and growing with and through the human life; an infinitely human God with all of a Man's mysterious powers and sympathies; a personal Life transcending

every possible intuition of our earth-bound personalities; a God whose human being and love are planet-wide and race-wide, yet a God who lives and grows here and now under all the conditions of human passion, affection, aspiration and struggle, only with incomparably more of wisdom, patience, hope and love. This is the God of the Ages, the God we need and want, the One who *shall* be, upon whom a strong man will risk all his earthly goods, and for whom a righteous man will risk his everlasting life. This is the religion of the modern man, conscious of his deepest needs and powers: a confident belief in the final purity, dignity and goodness, the actual presence of all *his* human passions in a living God. Man, an infinite god: God, an infinite Man. This is the religion, I tell you! How long, O Man-God, must men of the modern mind await thy prophet?

# II

# GOD AND THE WORLD-HOME

## I

Men's reflections upon the end of life, their thoughts of human destiny, have always centered somehow in their own passions, hopes, desires; they have always aimed, and that right passionately, at the thing devised for them by the action of their practical reason, their humane intelligence. Heaven to men has always been "home," the reflection of their tenderest, most practical endeavors after peace, power and harmony.

I set it down as a natural principle then, first, that your theory of life's end or destiny shall be *native* to the human beings it is designed for, and, second, that it shall be *attainable*.

## II

This principle, as I see it, at once excludes from our discussion two ponderous theories of life's destiny. The one, the ideal of Hellenic culture, is canceled on the ground that in us it is not native; the other, the conception of German idealism, on the ground that it is not attainable by us human beings.

The typical Greek in the days when he aimed at *anything* was a hunter of *being*. To him just to be, just to *stand forth*, to gather to himself more and more *being*, was in itself a sufficient

and supreme end in life. The perfect athlete, the perfect poet, the perfect philosopher, even the perfectly jolly or cynical man,— all these were, each in his proper sphere, "good and beautiful" exhibits of *being*. Just being, being just, good being, being good — to the Greek mind these *were* in fact simply convertible terms. Whatever is, is good; not is *right*, for that implies consideration, implies a doubt *overcome*, but is *good* — inherently, unconsciously, inalienably good.

A vast deal of solemn literature has been produced to explain this native optimism, this exuberant naturalism, of the Greek mind. Some credit it to climate, others to peninsular isolation, others again to this or that accident of human history. In any case the fact is clear and indubitable: the Greek optimism was native and natural, a matter of temperament. The *cheerful cynic* and *friendly solipsist*, each sublimely unconscious of the inward contradictoriness of his position, are typical Greeks. To us with our diabolical taste for *consistency* they are a source of perennial amazement; but then optimism, cheerful cynicism, friendly solipsism and all that are not native in us. In the eyes of the Greek, contrariwise, whatever of inconsistency, ugliness, or evil may for the moment have risen to the surface of his naturally rippling life speedily sank of its own dead weight to the pit-bottom of being and was smothered there, a "hardly real" as

Plato puts it, a practical non-entity. The Greek synonym for evil, you remember, was ὕλη, dead wood! Water-logged, heavy, ponderously inconsiderable.

Some of the "fathers" of the Christian church made a desperate shift to consecrate this Greek notion of life's end. They said: "God is essentially *ens realissimum, ens perfectissimum*; he is absolute being and your own destiny and eternal joy must consist in contemplation of, and participation in, his eternal perfection."

But *live* Christians have always been frankly negligent of this hybrid conception of God and human destiny; they have always *practically* repudiated this end of life. They have preferred the more distinctly Christian idea of a specific and concrete heaven as their destination. It was sometimes a pretty ghastly heaven, I grant, but concrete and teeming with active life nevertheless. Christian culture has tended always to aim at a destiny in some wise *human, social, home-like* in its deeper parts.

Whether for better or worse the Hellenic temperament with its *naturalism* and *optimism* is no longer *native*; it does and can no longer work on this human plane. Even those will admit the *fact* who most deeply deplore it. Nietzsche, for example, does most scathingly rebuke the Christian for prostituting his strong western nativity before an effeminate oriental form of culture.

But in all this he does most volubly admit the fact that we are no longer Greeks; we no more aim *naturally* at being. Our sole aim is not to get fatness whether in point of flesh or in point of spirit. Our ideal, I repeat, is *social*, humane, philanthropic, sympathetic, communistic. If we theorize at all independently we conceive being not as naturally good, but as becomingly so; not as perfectly wholesome, all evil being so much dead wood, but as painfully divided, evil being so much *live* passion to be mastered and downed by the cooler passion of sympathetic and socialistic aims.

I would there were time to compare these two ideals of human destiny; to compare them *odiously*; to affirm my entire and unreserved subscription to the humaner culture of the non-Hellenic Europeans. Such declaration of faith in the altruistic impulses and passions of the modern mind might do some good in these days when so much is being written in celebration of Greek ideals. But I must content myself with the simple fact that these Hellenic ideals are no longer *native*; we simply cannot — at least not naturally — aim at being. Most men of the modern mind would appear as ludicrous clowns if clothed in the ill-fitting modes of the Greeks.[1]

[1] Perhaps Marathon races are in point. I imagine the shores of Elysium are lined with athletic shades who witness with heavenly laughter our modern performances of that once great and *natural* event.

## III

And I find I have an equal quarrel with the ideal of German romanticism usually taught in the schools as strictly suited to our modern minds; the ideal, namely, of God as a perfect *self*. "Absolute being is God in truth," these modern schoolmen assure us, "perhaps not a natural but a supernatural being, perhaps not good here and now but good in eternity; a Life, a Self, a Person, an eternal, continuous, smooth, perfect *being*, is God." You see, unlike the Greek God, whose being was *of course* infinite and *naturally* good, this modern God *owns* an infinity and a perfection most scrupulously thought out, and most laboriously fitted into the structure of our modern dubious life.

Now if one were obliged to choose between these two conceptions: natural, instinctive, optimistic perfectness of being on the one hand, and romantic, self-conscious, thoroughly-cooked and digested, in short *philosophic* perfection on the other, I should not wonder at the man who favored the natural unconscious belief in being's essential goodness. But nothing can persuade me that this necessity of choice is upon us. The point, as I see it, is that we of the modern mind have seen *imperfection* so real and present, have been so infernally near to, if not actually in, hell that we are henceforth barred from any choice between this or that *kind* of perfection. Hence-

forth the vital consideration is not whether God is perfect in this way or in that; whether his perfection is natural and unconscious or rather conscious and full of eternally fitting purposes. The important thing is to make out whether God is perfect at all or not; to consider whether perfection applies in any considerable sense to our human life; to determine whether this perfection in God's case is by any means whatsoever attainable in our human affairs.

Now the express aim of the following pages is to consider "God" as a human relation, to investigate our human ideals, even the homeliest of them, in the light of a possible larger Life and deeper Sympathy. That this one point of our divine relation may stand out clearly I must set down a few radical principles. Thus:

A God of eternal perfection of any sort you will has nothing to *do* with *any* problem whatsoever, least of all with any humanity's problem involving, as it must, a horde of imperfect immoral beings as its irreducible data. There is no such thing as *moral* perfection in God's universe —if it be God's indeed! *Moral* perfection! listen to that phrase inwardly for a moment. Can't you hear something *split?* Doesn't the "moral" somehow crash away from the "perfection" in this beautiful structure of your dreams? Morality carries about it the sweat of the workingman, the stench of his will. Or, if you prefer poet Swinburne's way of putting the

case, "the perfume of manhood" issues from a being of such moral power. But does your in any wise *perfect* God sweat and smell of manhood? Rather *not*.

It needs to sprinkle a little common sense into our discussion at this point; to lay the dust which some absolute idealist always throws in the air whenever you require to see clearly the eternal perfection set forth in his mammoth account of God. I confess that after many years of scrupulous consideration I am as much as ever in the dark; I, stupid that I am, simply cannot *see clearly* how a thing, though it were a God, can be both itself and its opposite in any sense or in any degree whatsoever. Absolute idealism and common sense do leave me always with a perfect mess of irreducible contradictions stewing in my hot brain. Such as these, for example:

God is perfect; we imperfect. God whole; we partial. God an individual of eternal inward harmony; we a society of maladjusted laborers after health, comfort, harmony. God is indisputably One, of one mind and will; we raucously many, of many minds and wills. God is fully and healthily That; we hopelessly and incurably This. Idealism and common sense could not easily concoct two more alien beings than God and we!

And now the silly controversy is on! From the study of the idealist there bursts forth a perfect cloud of dry dust. In the consequent

confusion the voice of his idealism speaks these doubtfully consolatory and mystifying words: "We are 'implicitly' all that God is 'explicitly.' God is we 'in so far' as we are God. God is perfect in absolute degree, we in the degree in which we are . . . . God is 'in eternity' what we are 'in time.' God is good, eternally *made-good*, we are 'good in the making.' God is inwardly merely what we outwardly seek to become. God is the fulfilment, we the process. God solves 'instantly' and painlessly all the problems we tackle in the painful experiments of our waking hours." And so on *ad nauseam*.

Let him understand such language who can! As for me I am right sick of it all; the dryness and unreality of it all, they suffocate me. It all comes to this. Either: you and I are not *really* finite but infinite; not really in time but in eternity; not really imperfect but perfect; not really in a state of social unrest and evil to be overcome manfully with splendid pathos of one soul with another, perhaps of one human soul with another Human Soul; but rather in a solemn and solitary state of eternal harmony wherein any straining of our human persons would be ill-advised and in bad taste. Either this, I say, or else: God, the self of selves, the soul of souls, is not *really* infinite but finite, not really eternal and fulfilled but temporal and in process, not really perfect but imperfect, not really beyond us in any eternal way but most

literally and strictly with us in our human ways. I can neither see nor understand any other alternative. And the facts as common sense is apt to see them oblige one to adopt the latter view of God rather than the former view of man.

## IV

"If then the Greek ideal of our human destiny is not native and the ideal of German romanticism it not attainable shall we then accept the crass philosophy of the modern 'humanist' so-called?" someone will ask. By all manner of means, yes! But, first, let us word that humanist philosophy a little more particularly.

It would discover in the *human* the essence and aroma of the divine. The difference between your *you* and your God is in the main a gross quantitative matter. The larger Life is *larger* than you in very obvious fact but not diviner. The great God himself in all his powers and privileges is not more righteous nor more loving, no diviner, than you would most instinctively be, had you those same great energies and opportunities. You are infinite, most literally and prosaically infinite,—*you!* You, veriest beast of the earth! in those qualities wherein you do touch the living powers and the divine graces of the world's soul you are infinite, I say! You are God's maximum as God is your maximum. What becomes you becomes God. Where you are

there he is! What you are that he is! When you are then he is! Your purposes, your problems, your questions are most actually his. He does not fulfill nor solve nor answer them one whit more instantly than you. Your solutions are and must be his. You and he together, most intimately and mutually *together*, become That I have called "Man-God."

"What is man that God is mindful of *him?*" you ask. "What is God that thou art mindful of *him?*" I retort. Do you dare to debase man? Then I dare to debase God. Nay, *you* have debased him; for God *is* most literally that very Man whom you in your lust for material infinitude have trampled in the dust. Until you are able and strong-souled enough to go with me into the filthy plague spots of men and see God there, most palpably degraded and besmirched *there!* I want none of your immaculate infinitudes drawn, though never so knowingly, from the vaults of heaven; I will have none of your frightful infinitudes wrought in the sullen abysses of the world's ground! I find such a theologic, macrocephalic God parenoeic,— unnaturally, inhumanly, morbidly, perfect;— *la grandeur! l'illusion! grand Dieu!*

We need to lay this matter close to heart. Let me for one be simple and straight at this critical point: I haven't the faintest notion what use future generations may make of such once sacred terms as "infinite," "perfect" and the like; I

imagine they will one day be revived and made to serve once more a divine function in the language and living thoughts of men. But just now I find them pretty well worked out. Take a plain, modern man and insist upon it that God is perfect, infinite and all that; he will say: "Certainly, of course, sure thing! *But what of it?* Does that not simply shift onto the shoulders of men, onto them *exclusively*, the considerable task of overcoming the world's very ponderable imperfection and finitudes? Is not God, in such a case of perfection and infinitude, *in*-cased, shut off, removed, inconsiderable, in-himself?" We need to lay this matter to heart.

And the best way I know of laying this matter to heart would be to try, seriously, earnestly, *devotionally to try*, the alternative experience of God; the experience of him, namely, as finite, imperfect, becoming divine, strictly social, sympathetic, human in all his greater Energy and Life.

There is, one must admit, a subtle and charming perfume of infinitude pervading the perfect being of God as conceived by men of the past; to one of mystic temperament a perfect God is as a very breath of his nostrils; he lives and, alas, dies by him; it is a luxury, this belief in God's infinity and perfection, not lightly to be given up. He is so dependable, so luxurious, so *ennervating*, this God of the ages, this God of aged perfection. There is no denying that he is the God of a superfine aristocratic form of human

culture. He is a God of no social problems or social instincts; invariably he has been the idol of things as they are, the God of the existing order, the God of those who prey upon their weaker fellows. I except the mystics, you see; but the rest of mankind have invariably used the eternally perfect and infinite God as an instrument of exploitation, palliation, delay, delusion, enslavement in human affairs. Let a palpably imperfect and finite creature cry out against his intolerable fate and they will throw him the sop of a remote and distant perfection, a foreign shore, where in God he too will eventually find his perfect home — *provided* he complain and curse no more! "Laissez-faire"— that's the solution of human affairs invariably offered by a perfect God and his subscribers. We need to lay this matter to heart.

*Lay it to heart then!* Just allow yourself to think unafraid, unashamed and plainly that God is *not* all this; that he does *not* tolerate all this exploitation, palliation, arictocratic insolence; that he is most actively and sweatingly human; that his spirit is right poignantly *involved* in human relations, very strictly present in human being; that he moves in human destinies, writhes in all our human bestialities, ascends in all our human flights of justice and righteousness; that his spirit watches and pushes and pulls in all the efforts of our human race! God almighty, what a God! God all-human, what a God! Cry out,

sing, shout for joy! Unto us a God is born! born of human labor! a Son of Man! himself a Man, a great Man-God, an incomparable God-Man, a God with sweating soul!

Do you ask then whether God is simply the spirit of humanity? I reply that God is essentially and simply just that. There are no considerable facts in the universe,— in God, that is,— save *men*. God is the ideal harmony of these human selves. As such he is — why not? — a spirit of humanity; a group spirit of the many conscious human spirits on the face of the world; a God-Man, as I have said. Beyond this is the Great-Beyond, the Vast Unknown into which men of to-day and of future generations, even as passionately faithful men of the past, will project a God of their own inner life; a Man-God, I say. In this the humanist simply demands and exercises the right of his surpassing, superabundant Manhood, the right of *men* who have gone before, the right of passionate faith, the right to pull from out the everlasting white-hot fires of being all that his soul does most genuinely require, the right to create God in his own image, the will to believe that out of the Nowhere, out of the Great Unknown has arisen, and will rise evermore, a being and living Great Man, — living and being by the same eternal passions the most lowly *man* may find in his own soul.

The off-hand criticism with which your aristocrat fronts this divine faith I find,— I will not

say refutable but *detestable*. "How do you know," he asks, "how do you humanists *know* that the God in your case does really surpass a fairly civilized man? A fine old Savage *you* make of God, forsooth!"

"How do we *know?*" Well, to be plain about it, we don't know that the divine humanity we celebrate surpasses the highest, or for that matter the very meanest type of human life! But our argument — and *that* we shall reiterate in the face of your smug rationalism, by *that* we shall everlastingly prevent your pompous digressions — the argument of human experience is that the God of humanity unlike your God of Reason — for which God be thanked! — does not surpass all human types *absolutely*, does not blindly and stolidly pass by *all* places of human agony and heroism, does not lose in his great Life *all* the sweetness and braveness of human life! That is a simple enough argument; and upon that and that alone rests the strange case, of the humanist — the argument of human experience, the real presence of human things in God!

For the rest I imagine — you should work that word "imagine" thoroughly into your theological vocabulary; it would relieve some of the stiffness of your subject — I imagine God as covering all types of human beings rich and poor, high and low, knave and fool, innocent young children and wise old men, human and —

*human.* That's all: God knows that's enough! It is a matter of forming and by main force establishing human ideals in the world; of placing God upon ground hallowed by our human feet; of doing God honor by admitting him, *human as he is!* into the region of our human privacies; of heeding the knocking of his spirit and admitting him to our homes. It happens that the highest *living* ideal the normal spirit of man has ever formed of God and his own destiny is not comprehended in the idea of God's being and perfection. His stiff being has got to be softened, his diabolical perfection has got to be humanized for men whose chief need is not to marvel and reflect but to live and love. Look down the vista of human history and, if you be not hopelessly blind as one who having eyes refuses to see, you will behold along the way the human faces of men's gods; you will see God as King in a kingdom, as Ruler in an ideal city, as Father-spirit in a great world-home; you will see man-like Gods walking in the ways of men. Their divine faces are ofttimes veiled, their names unknown, their hands upon their mouths, their forms fading imperceptibly into the Great Unknown. But men have *lived* upon these fleeting glimpses they have had of their gods' human parts, have done or refrained from this or that because of the presence they felt of this overbrooding Man-God of the ages. That is what you will *see,* I say, if you be not brain-blind.

History alone, cold bare facts, suffice for this argument of human experience, this God of human mien.

Well then draw your inference and your method from the *facts*. Take these human ideals full seriously; vitalize, idealize, transfigure them; be mystic and humanistic with a right good will! And you will have the royal truth of the whole matter. Dare to postulate God as the personal conscious growing spirit of human life, an Energy and Spirit of harmony among us human beings, a spirit of militant love, planet-wide and race-wide! This great Man-God is seeking his own. His larger Life is no more fair and just and harmonious than your human life. His Life waits upon, depends upon you, seeks to lead your human in ways of deeper and broader good will and sweet sanity. God! God-Man! Man-God! God alive! he lives and moves and has his being in you! man-god! god-man! man-alive! In you! I say. He is even as a father who has his own spiritual problems, all unknown to his son: he is struggling toward a larger Life even in the very hour when his anxious spirit is leading the son in the way wherein his older soul has already moved. All that the Father has painfully wrought in his larger Life may be wrecked and ruined in the son's. Anxiously, full anxiously, does the Father-spirit wait upon us to keep holy and sacred the things of his spirit.

I conceive the World-Life to be just this: an

ever ascending scale of living being, God the indwelling spirit of the whole, humanity a ceaseless generation of lives within his larger Life, henceforth each man of us responsible,— not only *gifted* with life but before God *responsible* to the very last degree — for his part in the Life of the whole, each generation ideally leading on the generation following, God-Man the enduring steady patient and hopeful Leader of this procession of human spirits within his large, generous and courageous Life.

Ah! the mighty, the almighty courage of it all!

## V

For years I have accustomed myself to think of my God thus in concrete human terms; to oppose all the abstractions of the perfectionists and idealists with specific cases of God wherein the perfection or, as the case may be, the imperfection of the universal Life is most humanly evident. Such a method does clear things, does emphasize God tremendously. In all the striking situations of life — we may let the procession of humdrum events pass by unnoticed — in all the conspicuous and grave phenomena of human history to say and to *see* "God": to consider whether the God feeling *fits* there: that is the method. A few instances will make this clearer, I hope. Thus:

VI

Once I attended in Oxford a stupendous public reception. The occasion was strikingly, *obviously* great. The world's scholars were there weltering and sweltering in "academic dress." The Lord Mayor of Oxford was "receiving"! There he stood silk-stockinged and gartered, knee-breeched, wooden-muscled, solemn-faced, closed-mouthed, circumpressed with lackeys doing this and that right aimlessly,— in short proper and *magnifique!* "My Lord Mayor of Oxford!" . . . God!

VII

But a few months later found me intruded upon another academic occasion of very different atmosphere and intention. It was the time and place where a great American university was conferring its honorary degrees. I think it has never yet been given me to witness such quiet, sincere, well-proportioned dignity as invested this occasion. The place was pervaded by the almost tangible *power* of a great institution; men sat silenced by the magnificent energy of an unseen wisdom. The ceremonies proceeded with the solemn unhurried dignity of a great religious mass; the voice of the university's president, deliberate, steady, serious and sincere, announced the degrees and their causes to us who had come to listen. The great men thus honored, it seemed

as if they grew in very physique under the strong terms of that great time and place. One, I seem to remember, wept like a little child as he felt the degree of honor conferred upon him thus at the end of his long and humane career. "Doctors of Letters," Doctors of Humanity! . . God!

VIII

Once I sat with a lost soul in an attic overlooking one of the plague spots of this earth. She was unclean and lean like the starving hounds one might see in the alley hard by. Her jowls and teeth were eaten away by a loathsome disease. For the matter of a few pennies she would have groveled and licked my feet: she was so low and hungry and damned. Poor attic hell! Poor damned soul! Sad frayed fabric of humanity! . . . God!

IX

There was once a man, an unlicensed doctor of humanity, who spoke to such, healing them and telling them to go their way and sin no more. The meagre reports yet tell us something of the consummate power of the man, the awful dignity of his humanity: he moved unhampered by worldly properties or social conventions, upright! gigantic! a soul of iron, a heart of sweet-healing oil, a Man of God! Christ! . . . God!

So you see the method. God in humanity here and there,— genuinely, conspiciously here and there, or as the case may be, alas, *not* there or here. Why not apply the method on an immense scale in order to find a genuinely, immensely real God?

All these years the expert seekers after God have been star-gazing, deducing God in celestial magnitudes of one sort or another. Do we do some earth-gazing! Mount we together to some mystic height and look — *down!* down upon these habitations of men. See the great spirit of God settling upon *people!* — Lord Mayors, Doctors of Humanity, damned souls, Christs! God drenching with his spirit live passionate people like you and me; God *facing* humanity, assuming human life, becoming increasingly conscious, active, feeling, alive, as his great searching spirit approaches nearer and nearer the homes of men and catches the low murmur of their busy heroic affairs. God alive! . . . God!

There are those, you know, who would argue upon this mount of humanistic vision. "God," they monotonously recite, "being infinite and perfect, must of course settle *equally* over the world of human beings; his spirit is *concentrated* everywhere,— no more here than there, no less there than here; infinite, perfect, all-wise, *everywhere!*" But in *that* there is no vision. Come

again up the mount of humanistic vision. *Look* down, look *down!* What do you see? Not what do you infer from your monstrously infinite preconception of God, but what do you *see?* You see the spirit of God issuing from the Great Unknown, the great Vault Beyond, and approaching the homes of men; his spirit spreading itself passably and lightly *there* where men have little need or want of him, lingeringly and passionately *here* where some great crisis or tragedy of human being demands something worth while of his superabundant Life and Wisdom. The divine spirit most actively concentrated where the need and want are greatest: that's what you see, comrade. God-Man! . . . God!

## XI

"But the *proof*, man! the proof!" you demand. Alas! there is no proof. The thing we are here considering is too worthy to be proved. Wasn't it Tennyson who said somewhere that what is worth proving can't *be* proved? Well, such is the case here. It is a matter not for proving but for seeing; not for demonstration but for vision. That mount of humanistic vision we were talking about is of course in your own living soul. Do you *see there*, do you *find there* in your own inner life, your own mystic humanity, the courage and the *will* to believe in this triumphantly and passionately regnant God of humanity? If not, you are blind and, so far,

lost! Your own humanity, such as it is, is a lie! a most stupid, thoughtless, insensible lie! nothing short of that! For lying, as I see it, is just the cutting off of a tale of human life before it is told,—in this instance the choking and murdering of your humanity at just the point where it would begin to live eternally.

This is what I mean by being "divine": a God-Man not by any manner of means absolute in his being but by all manner of means absolute in his ideals, impulses, passions. In all that is human he must and shall and will be absolute,—tenderly, compassionately *absolute;* absolutely patient, absolutely hopeful, absolutely loving, absolutely brave, *absolutely human!*

Now do you ask for evidence? Just open your soul to it; it will overwhelm you, once you see it. Do you mean to say you lack *evidence* that a spirit of Life larger, deeper, higher than the life we *call* human is at work in the world? that a great humane world-soul is toiling and sweating with men? that sin is destructive and goodness conservative of that Life? that the principle of increasing righteousness is regnant and shall—perhaps not *must* but most certainly *shall*—triumph over the lowering lusts and passions of that Life? Who wants evidence of all this, I say, is denying his own humanity, is desecrating his own inner place of vision, is lying in the face of Man and in the sight of God!

A challenge to faith! Live like a human

being! You will engender deep within your human soul a perfect passion of belief in things human, a perfect feeling of companionship with God-Man in all your ways of life, a steady and calm determination to risk all, all your interests, your ambitions, your hopes, your powers, your life, upon the issue and ultimate triumph of humane being, of Man-God! For you will have seen out there in humanity's unformed future a destiny of human Life toward which and in which your human and God's human being together are working with a right good will. Together then! On! *On!* For humanity's sake, for God's sake, on!

That man alone blasphemes who abuses in what way soever this deeper humanity of him; who cheapens his human life and robs himself of his own rightful, *creative* operations in Life. Man alive! God does most imperatively rest upon your life. Put your shoulder to the wheel! Sweat, bleed, strain, heave, love! Live like a human being! Live like a God!

The whole weight of the universe does rest upon your shoulders and his; upon *you*, Man, and upon *him*, God-Man. Your life in his is mystically clothed in garments incomparably beautifuler than these poor rags of humanity now visible to our naked eyes. Who or what can visibly cover the immeasurable breadth and width and depth of humanity's God of firm and patient and hopeful Life? Life increasing and abundant;

universal Life; a willing and glad symphony of live persons, men, supermen, angels, gods, God;—a harmony of real people, half-human, half-divine, half-men, half-gods; men becoming gods, gods becoming men;— a universal communism of man and God, God-Man, Man-God: that is what one sees and, seeing, puts his shoulder to the wheel, helps move in the energies of the God-Life, participates in the making of God-Man.

## XII

I have always felt this quality of unconquerable humanity in Stevenson. Even on his very gravestone, you remember, he would have it chiseled that he laid him down "with a will." If you can listen to his lines on faith without feeling the sharp sting of them, then go bury thyself in the world ground, out of sight of all living creatures; for you may know that your soul is insensible, mortified and dead indeed. Thus:

"God, if this were enough,
That I see things bare to the buff
And up to the buttocks in mire;
That I ask nor hope nor hire,
Nut in the husk
Or dawn before the dusk,
Nor life beyond death;
God, if this were faith.

"Having felt thy wind in my face
Spit sorrow and disgrace,

Having seen thy evil doom
In Golgotha and Khartoum,
And the brutes, the work of thine hands,
Fill with injustice lands
And stain with blood the sea;
If still in my veins the glee
Of the black night and the sun
And the lost battle run;
If, an adept,
The iniquitous lists I still accept
With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good;
God, if that were enough.

"If to feel in the sink of the slough
And the sink of the mire
Veins of glory and fire
Run through and transpierce and transpire,
And a secret purpose of glory in every part,
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart,
To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on forever and fail, and go on again,
To be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing
not seen with the eyes:
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right
And the smoothe shall bloom from the rough:
Lord, if that were enough."

This is Stevenson: to thrill with the joy of girded men, to go on forever and fail, and *go on*

*again*, to be mauled to the earth and *arise*, to *contend* for a thing not seen with the eyes! This is Stevenson who, tradition says, when a disease of the lungs disabled beyond usefulness his good right arm learned to write with his left; and who when the disability claimed his left dictated to an amanuensis for hours and days; and who, when at last he could no longer speak for very weakness of his despoiled chest, learned to speak with his still free, though unarmed, fingers the mute language of the deaf and dumb, that he might yet with his very last drop of energy express in some wise the still buoyant, broken hopes of his triumphant soul! This was Stevenson,—an atheist, some called him; let us rather crown him supremest, bravest man-god of them all; deepest communer with the invisible heroisms of human life; profoundest believer in God-Man!

"Lord, if that were enough." Ye men of iron hearts! it *is* enough and to spare. Grasp it and share it, spread it abroad generously over this great sea of humanity weltering before you into the shoreless regions of eternity, this unconquerable humanity! The eternal human: the eternal divine; the eternal man: the eternal God; God-Man: Man-God everlasting!

## XIII

A myticism of the will, I take it;— and accept it, too. I can fully believe that such mysticism, if need were, would *create God;* and *pull* something of a like courage and human conscience from out of the very bowels of hell! Be a man then, you atheist so-called; be a man, a full man, scrupulously right and brave, unashamed and unafraid in all your actions, spewing all vileness from your soul! Be gigantic! in your own person stand as straight and as high as *you* are, act as if there were a God; yea, as you were a god! And one of these days, when thus you stand forth there in all your dubiety, yet in all your risen Manhood, you will see God — it may be created, awakened, aroused in some measure by your own very strong power of regnant Manhood. As God lives! it shall be even so. And then — the awfuler power, the deeper understanding, the wonderfuler companionship of your *kind* of God will be yours *forevermore.* Forevermore! does that not *mean* forevermore?

Be an atheist, friend, if you must in all conscience. But avoid cynicism and indolence of soul as they were the devil's own vices. Be quick and noble, oppose all idleness and scornfulness of spirit; and your *weight,* atheist though you be, will pull on the diviner scale of the world's powers; you will, all unwittingly, help God; you will

in the end of your life willingly yield to the masterful soul of him I call Man-God.

Let William James speak a word to us in this matter. God knows he is pagan enough: they say he doesn't pray any more! Well, in the words I now quote he prays all unconsciously, yet actually enough to lead us through doubt to a reliable method of faith. Thus:

"If this be a moral universe; if by my acts I be a factor of its destinies; if to believe where I may doubt be itself a moral act analogous to voting for a side not yet sure to win,—by what right shall they close in upon me and steadily negate the deepest conceivable function of my being by their preposterous command that I shall stir neither hand or foot, but remain balancing myself in eternal and insoluble doubt? . . . He who commands himself not to be credulous of God, of duty, of freedom, of immortality, may again and again be indistinguishable from him who dogmatically denies them. Skepticism in moral matters is an active ally of immorality. Who is not for is against. The universe will have no neutrals in these questions. In theory or in practice, dodge or hedge, or talk as we like about a wise scepticism, we are really doing volunteer service for one side or the other."

Be credulous of God: that is the method, the way of all life, the way of faith. And if you will thus be credulous of God you may by the same token develop inwardly the most precious *creed*

your soul can imagine or ask of the great world's soul — a full creed in very human truth, a creed-ful of invisible imperatives, of eternal verities, of everlasting humanities. Your ample creed will cover and protect and sanctify all that your human life can want or hope for of comfort, power, efficiency, decency, sanity, bravery in life.

Among my more intimate documents I have a letter from just such a masterful man. He is dying away out on the "great divide" of the Rocky mountains. His life has staggered under blow after blow of fate. At each turn of the road he has lived dutifully, manfully, naturally and unaffectedly leaving the pleasant prospect he once had seen before him in his life and quietly taking, without even so much as a looking-back or a whimper, terribly rough courses; courses which you and I, my friends, would have shrunk from, I'm afraid. The disease which now carries him off into the Great Unknown, that mysterious "Perhaps" beyond this life, he contracted, I am told, in ministering to a similarly stricken sister. He is to my mind a nobleman of high degree.

I had written him telling him of my great pride and fondness of him: he had once been my student; and telling him something of the courage and wisdom I, the teacher, had found in him, the pupil: how he had taught me great things all unconsciously. He writes to this effect: "Some days I am better, others worse. I am still strong enough to work an hour or so a day in the field.

This keeps my body and my soul together. When they are no longer together what will befall me I do not know. I can only doubt and hope and love — that's all."

But God knows, my friend, that's enough! With what more, in God's name, can a man face reality? with what more of *character?* with what more of *rightness?* with what purer garments of humanity, nay, of *divinity*, can a man clothe himself ere he go upon his long journey? — than modest doubt, strong hope and self-destroying love?

Courage, comrade! out there on the great divide, out there on the universe's great divide! Listen! let your soul hearken toward that Silence of Eternity! What is that articulate, mysterious breath of God saying? "Hasten on with me, thou great strong man, thou child of immaculate soul, thou heart of my Life, thou Man of my Soul. Together, through eternity *together*, we shall 'doubt and hope and love — that's all.'"

# III

# LIFE EVERLASTING: ITS CONDITION

I

The spiritual forms on which men have woven their growing lives are, as it has always seemed to me, singularly few and simple. How many things, how many *stupidities*, do you believe? O, say perhaps a thousand or so. How many things, how many *realities*, do you *need* to believe? Well, say about ten, more or less. Is that not the reply of past generations, the judgment of history?

Given ten, more or less, flexible and limpid beliefs, you are equipped for life now and everlasting! Keep the currents of your being spontaneous and free; flee for dear life from all dogmatisms and their "categories"; hold your soul's home simple and comfortable with an equipment of, say, ten changeable and yet substantial necessities, rules, regulations, beliefs; you are fixed for all times and places of God's home. Remember the "woes" of that once giant of Nazareth: utterly oust from your life *all* the Scribes and Pharisees, not those merely whom you may encounter on the street,— they are of such sour mien altogether that one easily casts them out — but those also whom you may feel operating in the secret places of your soul; the scribal and

pharisaical creatures of your very mind; the inner tendency to harden and dogmatize; the inclination to fix the living impulsiveness of your inner lives. The point is, to keep open-minded, spontaneous, free, limpid, flexible, radical in all matters that do genuinely *matter*.

Take, for example, that word "eternal" which shall concern us in these following pages. What a ghastly, monstrous thing the scribes and Pharisees have made of it! Just think of being imprisoned in that damnably perfect state they describe as eternal! just imagine being held there beyond even the power of death to set you free! just consider your soul, an entity, grinning out its imperishable life in sickly eternal beatitude, or else, more's the pity, gnashing its spectral teeth and wailing out its hopelessly eternal life! Whenever a man tells me his soul is necessarily eternal I want to reply, "Ay, and by the same token it is *hopelessly* eternal;—hopeless, whether in heaven or in hell."

The trouble is that we have in our Christian eschatology (as the technical term has it) an attempted confection of two most alien elements, the one Judaic, the other Hellenic. The Jew's conception of future things—I mean even his idea of his own race's future, granting to the critics what in my uncritical moments I very much doubt; namely, that the Jew had no vision of a future after death—his idea of future things, I say, was full of a very concrete and splendid

imagery; it was a place of life, a condition of active, progressive righteousness; its only alternative was not an eternally congealed, passionless heaven nor yet an eternally molten, evenly white-hot hell; the only opposite he could conceive to this natural and faithful Life was — Death! "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil." "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose *life* that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God; that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life and the strength of thy days."

Future things looked far otherwise to the Greek. In his view life here is no specially strenuous affair, no austerely arranged matter of righteousness. The thing is, to live naturally while you live, to follow the natural course of human events, to express your proper genius for the sheer pleasure of the thing itself, to live naturally, to die naturally and then enter Elysium naturally. "What is Elysium?" you ask. Well, it is what you might *naturally* expect. What *could* a disembodied, fully expressed soul be but a *shade*, a ghost, a naturally empty, contemplative sort of soul in *that same sort* of eternal life, a spectral, phantasmal kind of being? To discharge his will and his genius fully here in this life, then to walk contemplatively and soberly among the shades of Elysium — all this

seemed proper, natural, desirable to your typical Greek.

Now our modern heaven or hell is, as I was just saying, an attempted confection of these two essentially alien elements, one drawn from the genius of Jewish, the other from that of Hellenic culture. As Judaic, heaven and hell are concrete, explicit, filled with fleshly men and women. As Hellenic these mythologic places are static, fixed, full of vague harmless shades of being. In Christian tradition the alternative of Life is no longer imaged as natural death but as unnatural life; life eternally and hopelessly balanced in "sanctification" with its very proper rewards or in sin with its very hot torments, world without end, world without change; a world most dull and deadening; in heaven every prospect equally ravishing, in hell every spot equally hot.

In such a state, any psychologist will tell you, the psychophysical organism he calls the soul could not endure for long; it must needs die of very dullness; there is no *stimulus*, he will explain, in a steadily unremitting pain or pleasure;— no stimulus, no response, no life in the end. The inevitable outcome of such a psychophysical performance as would go on in heaven or hell would be — *insensibility*.

There are those who will complain that this is a rather shallow caricature of the Christian eschatology. Well, that points my argument: the Christian eschatology, once you clear it of

confusing, learned interpretations, *is* shallow; itself is a caricature of two utterly diverse ideas of future things: Judaic *moral vitality* and Greek *naturalism*. The man of militant righteousness, the Jew, actually fighting death and sin; the Greek, a man of contemplative, healthy-mindedness, actually living a present life and amusing himself meanwhile with speculations upon *pure* goodness and *pure* being — these two men do not naturally mix together. Whenever the Jew caught a vision of the future he saw a Jew there, or his race there if you will, busily engaged in the way of righteousness; whenever the Greek had a vision of his future soul he found it a shade moving deliberately and vaguely here and there in a wholly phantasmal, future world. Such diverse temperaments can unite only superficially. The combination of such disparate world-views into heaven and hell must needs be shallow.

As for me I prefer the Life-and-Death conception in all its original purity. In all soberness of mind I declare I would rather die than go to heaven — unless it were on the very frontier of heaven, on the borderland of hell, in the celestial slums, far from the shades of heaven, the Graeco-Jewish scribes, Pharisees and doctors of eschatology! On the borderland of hell, on the frontier of heaven, where common people are still getting saved, give me endless life there! *There* is something worth while! Sweating through the day, then *intelligibly* resting by night; spreading

the spirit of sweet brotherhood abroad to cool the hot lives and cheer the broken hearts of one's fellows; living! freely, limpidly, gloriously living! verging always upon sorrow, catastrophe, hell! but keeping spontaneous, courageous, manful! measuring eternity not in *years* — God! how weary, how deadly dull the years, were they throughout eternity blissful, fulfilled, uneventful, unangered, serene and all that silly dream of idle souls! — but in *instants*, the instantaneous moving out toward Life or Death or God knows what; with no pusillanimous thought of what, but only with surpassing joy and eagerness for the work and life of the passing time. Is such a Life not eternal in God's world? Then so much the worse for God, I may say.

II

We may gather sweet wisdom in this matter out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. How does a child live its days? Well, for one thing, it solves its ultimate problems by the process of living. Have you ever watched a living child at its play? If not, your philosophy can in no wise follow the method of life. In his child's play you may observe in all naked simplicity the process of living. See him play, then! A problem arises at some point in his otherwise fluent game. What does he *do?* Does he hesitate? does he concoct a consistent and completed plan for the further conducting of his living enterprise? does he

*ratiocinate?* By no means. He simply alters by a hair's breadth, or it may be *radically*, the original plan of his play. Perhaps the rude thing that does seemingly stand there, an impertinence and impediment in his way, he plays is *not* there; thereby reducing its impedimental proportions, if indeed not removing them altogether, root and branch. The child life is, in a word, free, fluent, limpid, uncategorical. And he does in very truth live in a world likewise plastic, fluent, playful.

It is only since Groos published his books on the Play of Animals and the Play of Man that we have come to a fair understanding of this playing instinct. For it *is* an instinct, he tells us. As such, it does work; it does preserve the life of the child-animal and animal-child. The world they inwardly image in play is just the outwardly real world they front in later life. The region of their plays does open out imperceptibly and unbrokenly into the region of their larger and solemner concerns in life.

Perhaps the great world is in very truth a play-ground, a fighting-ground,— a real home, a real heaven, a most genuine Valhalla? Perhaps if you play here in all childlike seriousness, you too will find that the world of your inwardly assumed beauty and goodness and harmony is just the outwardly real world which your not playful fellows, God pity them! declare to be ugly, hard, material, godless, devilish? Perhaps if you live

here and now as if you were an immortal god of a sort you will find that your playing at divinity has in solemn effect prepared you for a real world, a real future divinity you will front after death? Perhaps the region of your playing at divinity will shade imperceptibly and unbrokenly into a region of larger, invisibler realities of Life? Well, children anyway find playing a good instinct; they never quite know when the play ceases and the reality begins; they are not conscious where earth knocks off and heaven begins, never quite mindful of the difference between make-believe and reality. Perhaps, as things invisibly and indubitably are, there *is* no such difference. It is a good instinct, surely, that goes naturally and playfully from childhood to old age. Why not a trustworthy instinct that would go naturally from old age to Death,—nay, to *Life?*

If you complain that you do not find this argument convincing, I reply that you have misunderstood me utterly, from beginning to end; for I am not arguing at all. I find arguing in such matters unprofitable and even hateful. I have seen men interpose arguments, protests, realities, cold facts, into the plays of children. I for one am just child enough to doubt whether their alleged realities *were* cold facts after all; just child enough to hate them for their complacent, solemn, brutal interruption of Life's Game.

Your contemptible vender of solid facts is a public nuisance and should be outlawed on Life's Play-ground. He is a foreigner there, knows not the language of those playing there, nor has he any unspoken understanding of the serious play going forward there. Off with him to the dungeon! He will be happier there, I think; for in that abyss bottomed with hard facts he and his tribe of fact-collectors may rap this and that solidity to their heart's content, world without end. *They* won't ever discover that they are not in the real world of God's sunlight and changing seasons; that they are instead in the very pit-bottom of being. Off with them to their dungeon-heaven, then!

In the upper region of God's everlasting sunlight, where flowers may still bear fruit, and men are growing to a fuller stature of Manhood, where things are not solid in fact but subject to the will of man, fluent in the will of God,— in that upper world we must become as a little child; like a little child hoping and believing all things; eternally playing right really, right seriously; knowing nothing except a quick responsiveness to all the swelling processes of Life. In the most literal sense must we leave the rest to God — hoping and believing that in his great world-home, in his immeasurable battle-ground will be found fair fields; everlasting breathing-spaces; goodly instruments of living being innumerable; Life evermore.

Does God *not* thus environ us with possibilities of life, *life, life!* then so much the worse for God, as I have said.

III

When you ask the child on what solid ground his play rests, or what its certain outcome is to be, you spoil the whole business for him. The very soul of it, and of him too, subsists upon insecurities, possibilities; the very zest of his playing and being lies in the power he holds and wields of changing the program; of playing good and bad, good-man and bad-man, God and Devil, with the self-same instruments of life and on the self-same ground of being. A play planned for him in its every detail and enduring, suppose, for even an hour or so is to the natural child a most unmitigated abomination with no touch of attractiveness in the whole wearisome prospect. He *must* have range, freedom, prospect of change, power of alteration, *risk*,— or he dies.

Well, it is even so with men of iron constitution. In this great affair of everlasting life, for example, how they despise and refute your arguments and your descriptions! You begin to counsel with them, saying: "Immortality is proved thus and so." But before you have done speaking they are off into regions of untried and unproved possibilities of being. Just essay to describe the "next world" to him; scrupulously avoid putting into your description any dash of fairy-land where an unheard-of and as it were im-

possible thing may happen at any moment, where abysses may open up or false by-ways lead a man to a lower region if he do not watch out — describe the "next world" to him with this painful and patient *accuracy*, I say, and in the end of your efforts you will find him gone in a sceptical disregard of your pretty exactitudes and with a barbarous immediate joy in the next step,— whether into a next world or not, who knows? Is a next world there? So much the better for the man who enters it full-fledged, full-grown. Is a next step *not* there? "So much the worse for the God of things as they are," he says. *What* the next world is or even *that* it is is, as he sees it, a matter beyond the beginning of your knowledge and in all regards beyond the ends of your voluble descriptions.

I have observed that children and natural men do actually live upon mystery. To both, your literalist, your absolutist, your rationalist is of all creatures on God's earth the most pestiferous and preposterous. To them, I mean children and strong men, all life is impulsive, passionate, spontaneous, free, risky. To him, I mean your cool-headed, cow-eyed rationalist, such natural life is loud, coarse, in bad form, ill-advised, over-heated, childish. I must say that I cannot feel the force of the latter's argument; it is so ponderous that it does not really hit one; it passes one by like some monstrous opaque body, eclipsing God's sun for a moment but soon lumbering on into that

shoreless region where float in utter vacuity all such dense, inconsiderable monsters of the world's being. In passing on his way to that monstrous region he condescends to tell you that your life is too passionate; that you are too impulsive; that you are a fool to take the risks you do in being; and all that. And all that he calls *argument*. Why! it is no more than *description*. He leaves open the whole question of fact. Is life perhaps not all the better for being just what he describes it to be: impulsive, passionate, childlike? That question, I imagine, will be everlastingly open. You will never know whether or not it had been better to have lived sedately or passionately, agedly or youthfully, conservatively or radically, until indeed you have come to life's end; until Being's Great Decision has been handed down in the world's ultimate Judgment. That is, never. For there is no life's end, there is no ultimate decision, no absolute Judge. I see no help for it: we've just got to take a chance, to follow our own native instinct, our deepest soul in this matter. Live hotly if you *be* sincerely passionate, calmly if you *be* incurably anæmic. Be yourself in any case! By that means, or else by *no* means, you will fit yourself for Death, or for Life.

A man with any iron in his constitution, with any zest of youth in his no matter how aged veins, will be apt to cast his vote on the side of the great world-soul's passions, the great God-Man's zest in life, the great Man-God's appetite for life ever-

lasting. By this I do not mean to celebrate *undisciplined* souls: yet for the life of me I cannot but recognize in them a certain native strength and health of mind. Thus Whitman, Carlyle, Nietzsche and a plenty of others were of this undisciplined type. In one way or other they have done a bit of mischief in the world, and no mistake;— mischief, that is, among unbridled, unlicensed, young fools! For that I am sorry enough; but I can understand *why* they burst forth, *why* they so spectacularly and madly broke over their traces. It was because they were irritated past enduring by the wooden steadiness, the *hauteur*, the very hateful complacencies of the world's godly authorities. Not to know even the beginning of lust or life or work, to live in a studied disregard of the sinner's hot body, or of the worker's sweating brow and aching soul, to steadily celebrate a God of your own making whose sole ***raison d'être*** is that he suits you and authorizes your sort of life in all its idle, emasculated propriety and calm sanity,— there is no *authority* in that. *That* but breeds passion, revolt, atheism in strong men,— and in children. From such a studied propriety children and strong men always shrink fearfully away. To them your self-conscious arrangement of life's spontaneous activities is nothing short of life's death and destruction.

Life, as one should see it, is playfulness, passion, power not abused but mastered, not dissi-

pated but concentrated; life mastered and concentrated upon a something eternally unformed and unmastered; life ever becoming, ever coming to be; life eternally facing a mystery of possible being and power; life bristling with passions mastered, sobered, solemnized, worlds without end; life, a Beyond ever opening out and blooming with the flower of manhood; eternity, the reckoning of this everlastingly unrealized Life! Men of iron constitution, even as children in the mysterious rites of their play-world, will always accept this mystery of Life's continuously unfulfilled Game. For them there is no *charm* in that fulfilled, eternally doddering, senile Proper-Life portrayed in the world's Book of the Wise; no risk, no life in the categories of your worldly-wise, quite dead authorities.

The man of iron, if you look *down* upon him, appears as an *enfant terrible*, an *enfant perdu* in fact. "Is he not a child lost in being, making a foolish and terrible game of life?" This is the perennial query of the world's psychophysical anæmics. The judgment from immemorial time of the lookers-down upon life's places of battle and sin has been that the whole thing, all that active battling life down there is a foolish, wasteful, over-impulsive, over-passionate business; "really somewhat vulgar, don't you know." The lookers-down naturally wonder why these busy, contentious workers down there don't look up now and then. "Why don't they look up?" Has

it never occurred to you, dear looker-down, what the true reason is? These men's business in life is so vital, so soul-involving, so immediate, instant, quick, that they, unlike you, have no leisure to enjoy the eternal prospect. One glance upward for them! and then they must back and down again into the midst of the world's great spontaneous, passionate Life.

"Can it be," you ask, "that these rude, strong, passionate men are indifferent then to the prospect of divine things, of future life, and all that?" No; if you will but descend from your high place of conventional securities and risk living for a season with these uncouth, pragmatic men, venturing with them upon their own plane of uncertainties and humane risks; you will find them not stolidly indifferent to the prospect of life, even of everlasting life, if only it be viewed from their level of *real* life. Your plain man does indeed view with a certain contempt and wholesome resentment your frantic attempts to penetrate the mysteries of the future, your nervous endeavor to throw yourself, as it were *bodily*, over into a region he conceives to be utterly problematic and unknowable. He wants little of your metaphysical arguments and still less of your psychic researches. As a class these robust men are in truth sceptics on the side of their pure reason;— who indeed is not in such wise sceptical? But you will not find them stubbornly opposed to any *vision* underlying your arguments and re-

searches. They protest not against *that*, but rather against the to them miserable caricature your contentions and evidences make of that invisible Life-beyond-life they heroically accept without argument and without visible facts to support their case. A man of patient and passionate faithfulness, the man who is ready to risk his everlasting life upon the grand assumption, the great "Perhaps" that the world is in God eternally, inwardly, reliably good,— such an one, I say, feels there is danger in all this arguing and whimpering and scurrying about it and about. He has watched you up there on your plane of lofty argument and occult experiment. And he has observed that you have sometimes lost your *awareness of eternal life* in your desperate battle of words. In his inmost soul your man of iron feels this condition of life itself; the condition, namely, of able-souled fitness *for* life, of spiritual readiness *for* any world whatever of living reality. Meanwhile in you he sometimes finds this readiness and fitness to live perilously reduced and obscured by all your wasteful conjectures and experiments in future things.

You cannot have lived long in the world of real men without having observed this: that your speculative arguments, mystical appeals and scientific demonstrations find a response only in souls already *in advance* of your argument; in lives whose fitness and readiness for the Thing itself, the everlasting thing itself, is already ha-

bitual and in need of no argument whatsoever. There *are* just such men in this present world; men whose own wholesome lives do most practically argue immortality; men whose present purity and sanity of soul is ever in advance of your tedious arguments and evidences of immortality; men who by living straight and good-heartedly here and now have most actively, right joyously, quite unconsciously argued their endless right to a place in the eternal good-heart of things.

And, it would seem, a diseased and cowardly soul argues equally against *its* immortality — most practically and frightfully *against* its right to an eternal part in the everlasting good soul of the world. His unfitness, his unreadiness for life should cause you to pause a moment in your monotonous recital of arguments from the books; to pause at least long enough to pity him in his very sorry case. For despite your scholastic account of his soul as entity is his real soul not quite evidently dying? already declining under some incurable disease of the spirit? Can all your arguments and evidences put together again what the real and devilish powers of the world have wrought asunder? Surely, his is a case not for deliberation but for action, not for metaphysical meditations, but for the ministrations of a very vigorous and very healing, very invisible power of Life, if such there be in this world or the next.

The thing is, not to bandy words; not to stop to consider any theory of the soul as impeccable or inviolable; not to leave it to its own devices because it is an invincible entity, an indestructible substance, a spiritual atom, or God knows what; but in the presence of the practical, gruesome, accomplished fact of a soul rotting in its sin-disease to take active measures to relieve and release it, whatever it is, into the free and open air of God's health-giving universe. I imagine — I say it in all reverence and silent solemnness of spirit — I presume to believe that this is in truth God's method: surely he allows entities, substances and suchlike, if suchlike there be, to care for themselves whilst his great, humane spirit is engaged most actively, painfully and lovingly in the guiding toward eternity, in the healing toward sanity in perpetuity, of living souls like you and me, and that sinner over there.

It takes a sinner in fact to try to the depths the power and patience and hopefulness of a living God. He lays a perpetual claim upon the invisible humanity of the larger Life. In his desperate case, seemingly diseased in spirit beyond recovery, with the horrifying consciousness that the very bottom is dropping out of his soul, sin-fainting, such a man never claims immortality as his inalienable right on the ground of your arguments, on the ground of your "entity" (whatever that may be). He feels, if he have a single drop of manhood left in the poor sclerotic

veins of his soul his pathetic unfitness and unreadiness for any eternal place in the divine order of things. He seems to know, as by a last remnant of the still unconquerable instinct of manhood in him, that for him a future life is no necessity and indeed no strictly *reasonable* hope. Thus with no preposterous arguments and with no cowardly evidences he enters the great Beyond. I think he fronts there no mechanically redeeming God-entity, no silent, eternal and icy-cold perfection, but just the eternally patient and hopeful spirit of a living God, the living and passionately hot Life of God, God alive! God almighty! God all human! Down with you, poor diseased soul! Prostrate before God! God! God! God! Then, up with you, rich restored soul! Leap for joy before God! God! God! For there in the great Beyond, before your very soul-eyes is — no ghostly company of dancing entities; there is the army of God! Be patient, penitent, strong in your own soul's manhood! And after the furlough granted you by the great Captain, once you are whole and strong and brave again, you too shall join the company of your peers and fight! fight! fight!

The gift and responsibility of eternal Life; the miracle of rebirth ever making good earth's dead losses; God's and your own everlasting combat with sin;— that's what *argues* immortality. In this manner of arguing even a sinner may lay a perpetual claim upon the patient and hopeful,

unbroken courage and eternal Life of God. Argue like a man then! Live like a man now and *then!*

IV

There is a certain unheroism in the doctrine of the soul's necessary immortality and ultimate salvation. As if, *do* what you may or please, the soul is a fixed Thing and must needs gravitate toward a fixed state of salvation! Advisedly I say gravitate, not levitate; for one would most assuredly have to go *down*, very perceptibly down below the level of the world's fair fighting-ground to be saved in any such secure case as that. Men are never so desperately wounded in God's battles that they *want* to go down to this soldier's home kind of heaven. They may *have* to go there for a season in God's providence but not for God's eternity — for which God be thanked! Their release from heaven onto the borderland of hell, the firing line of Life, they shall have, if only they want it; want it deep, deep down in the humane souls of them! After the horrible gashes of thy fighting finitude have in safe measure healed over, thou brave Man! thou shalt fight again somehow, and on some rough field of being; shalt fight again, do thou but deeply need and want such extension of thy time of enlistment in God's great invisible army of choice Noblemen!

But shame upon you, thou coward soul! to accept salvation and an everlasting furlough! not to win increasing Joy through the accomplish-

ments of an heroic life but to claim a soldier's home-heaven as a certified demand upon a mechanically and thoughtlessly beneficent deity; or, it may be, to find satisfaction in the physical accident of divine birth and settle down in princely splendour and stagnating idleness through an eternity with no sufficient life in you to suffer even *ennui*; to find joy in the unmerited gifts from a God of undiscriminating "saving grace" rather than in generous and undemanding co-operation with a God of inexorable righteousness and unsearchable Manhood! Shame, I say. There is in all this a fatal taint of unfaithfulness, unheroism, pusillanimity! The heaven it describes is in very truth a coward's paradise! the resort of the world's nerveless degenerates! In this world here and now we do not call such seekers after rest heroes or true princes; we call them tramps, dependents, defectives, cowards! We try to be patient with them, but we don't *celebrate* them. What to them is heaven we call, more plainly, "poor-houses."

And a poor house heaven would be in such a case: a place where for very idleness men would cultivate in selfish and unprosperous lives an abundant harvest of private and personal sins for the reaping of their grasping and ungenerous hands. There is, I repeat, something unheroic and debilitating in this self-assured optimism prevalent just now among men of a certain kind, — nay, of a very uncertain, wavering kind, if the

truth be told; in this sense of personal security; in this abuse, I should call it, of manhood; this abuse of the instruments of divine love and justice; in this obliging of God to be patient and hopeful because, forsooth, his human instruments are entities, indestructible and *doomed to be saved*. Have you ever known a person on earth who not theoretically but *practically* asserted this *necessary* goodness of his soul? who here in this world claimed to have attained that high level of inviolable purity? who advertised himself as "sanctified" (as the theologic phrase has it)? If so, you know what I mean in this point. Such a sanctified person is next to impossible; would he were wholly so!

v

I have said that the soul as an entity is unreal, or in any case inconsiderable "What, then, *is* the soul?" you may reasonably ask. I'm afraid one cannot say definitely; for, happily, the soul is nothing *definite*. A man's soul is his real self, we may say. That leaves you margin enough for endless speculations! But what I practically mean is that a man's genuine soul is identical with his relative character, the fugitive vices and virtues, the moving passions and joys of his daily rounds of being; in short, his present self. A soul not unlike a stone *is* what it *does*. Let the active qualities of a stone be depressed through constant abrasion by the hard places circumpressing it and it becomes less and less. Even so your

soul if it be disintegrated by faithless, unresisting contact with the storms and cataracts of life, is just so far gone. You see it is a question of resistance and fitness, the ability to overcome and profit by the world's every *anstoss*, as Fichte would say. Nay, more; tested naturally the stone is more enduring than a human soul. Of all *nature's* products a spiritual complex — and that's what every living soul is: not a simple entity but a complex of vital impulses, passions, instincts, resistances and attractions — of all the creatures nature has begotten a spiritual complex, a human soul, I say, is the least stable. How hardly a child of man grows to maturity of self-consciousness and self-responsibility and how painfully after such high consummation your son of man persists therein the hard-headed criminologist and alienist are constantly reminding us in their reports. No; for mere brute longevity give me a stone! It is much steadier than a man. The everlasting, *lapidic* hills are always celebrated in contrast with the vanities of human life. If you will seriously consider this point you will see that the soul of man along with its perfect God, as metaphysically construed, is in the stone's case: a *lapidic* soul-entity, a *lapidic* deity; dull, heavy, ponderous, stiff, stark, staring, *stony-dead*. They, the metaphysician and his God, are dead and have therefore gone to their everlasting rest. I suppose that is an important consideration. But they *are dead*, most gruesomely, palpably

petrified. Ask such a petrified God for the bread of life and what can he give you, what can you expect of *him*, save a stone of a soul? an immortal fossil of a man? — immortal, right enough, but, as I have contended, quite petrified, of frozen splendor; a monstrous mummy of a one-time good life? a dreadful exhibit of perfect Death?

I say all this perhaps a bit sharply not that anyone may be put to confusion;— that would be a sorry spectacle; but that anyone who will see clearly, may observe what the soul genuinely is; no considerable entity but an *organism*, quite really living or dying in the process of being; its life like every other of nature's children chastened and lawed by certain necessary *conditions* of life; a life which is even now generating enduring powers, everlasting adaptabilities, perpetual graces. Yet a little while and your soul, thus armed and fortified, will open the door of death to enter — who knows what-then? May we not in one deep sense ask, "Who *cares* what-then?" In no braggart sense, that is; braggadocio is the vice of a weak soul and deceives no one except perhaps itself. I mean, "Who cares what-then?" in a thoroughly considerate sense. Who is there engaged now and here most earnestly in exercising his soul's energies; in *being* to his full stature; in feeling rushing through the veins of his spirit the vast energies of the world-spirit's own Life;— who in such a case can possibly care what-then? The demands and joys of the

*this-now* are tingling in every drop of this present energy. It is no time for studied reflections upon entities, future destinies and such things; it is a time to live, and having lived, to enter in fulness of manhood, to enter — who cares whatthen? We have tasted of *this-now* and found it strong, nerve-steadying,— ay, splendid! Can *that-then* be any less?

Life begets life, life itself gives assurance of life. When Theodore Parker said in praying to his God, "I am conscious of my immortality," his consciousness was not thrown out wantonly into a settled, petrified, certified eternity; rather he felt within him a living Real, like molten steel, a living soul durable and changeable, lovable and livable throughout eternity *and a day*. By its exuberance of growing and fitting life the soul of such a man may even go the metaphysician one better; an entity exists throughout an eternity only, throughout a meagre eternity; a living *soul* conscious of its immortality would live for eternity and then *a day*.

## VI

Enter the stacks of some great library and examine the literature on the soul's origin, function and destiny. You will be amazed to find a mass of works dealing with the soul's *destiny* out of all conscionable proportion to the mass treating of the soul's *origin*. Indeed the latter consideration you will not meet at all until you come to

the books of modern psychophysics. In this concern of the soul the scholars have been conjectural rather than soberly scientific in their investigations. The result was inevitable: the farther they pushed their conjectures into the future the remoter their conclusions were from the *living thing* they set out to save. Take eternity and try to mean by it a literally endless succession of years; then smatter a human soul over all these years. What result do you get? Precisely the result of the metaphysician: a ghastly, petrified ghost of a soul, a shade in very literal truth. *No human being can stand the stain of eternity all at once;* one must have breathing-space, endless *time* in which to be preparing for eternity. And, as I see it, God is in similar case: he, if he be human — and if he be *not* human, who cares what-then? — *God, no more than we, can stand the pressure and pull of an eternity all at once.* Our destiny and his is not to be eternal but to become eternal, not to endure the perfect agony of a clearly perceived and eternally unbearable reality-all-at-once but to manfully wrest from an inchoate, unformed, potential eternity all that we may need for the day's work and purposes; all that, no more, no less!

Men, as I have hinted, would have seen this more clearly if they had examined the soul in the light of its origin. For I must insist stubbornly that it did have an origin in time. The soul of each of us here on this planet came to be at about

the age of two years. By soul I now most obviously mean no entity, (if it be that, who cares what-then?) but that living self I have spoken of; that *conscious* organism of self-impulses, passions, instincts; that self-*possession*, I suppose one might say. This living soul came to be: that's the point. Now, if you inquire what it was in this plastic source of its being, you will get a vivid sense of what it *ought to be* in its destiny, its outcome.

What is it in its origin? Well, I have just said that it is no ghost of a soul; no petrified, fixed, monstrous thing, but an impulsive, spontaneous, limpid soul of life with all the passion and zest and growing masterfulness of a little child. If you don't know what that is, friend, then God pity you! your case is hopeless. The thing is, to keep your soul in eternity just what it most naturally is in childhood — full of life; replete with passionate sorrows and joys; *instinct* with action; its being's currents flowing ever deeper and broader; by all means fluent, limpid, fresh; moving at first ripplingly and at last — if you *must* grow old — majestically on toward God only knows what precious and shoreless ocean of being.

Or *does* God know toward what shore? *I hope not.* For did he know all this full well, did his insight cover the depths of an infinitely full ocean of being, then he would be a great, silent, imperturbable Dead Sea into which our little streams of a day are innocently pouring. Rather let *him*

be the great tumbling, thundering, *living* ocean-waves! Rather let *him* come actively and consciously to join and further and refresh us as we in our deepest channels of being open out to meet him;— in those broadest and deepest channels, I say, where we are nearest that silent, shoreless ocean in which we and *he* live and move and have our being.

The figure is imperfect enough: perhaps the imagery of a great undercurrent *spring* of life would have fitted better. But you will understand me in any case to mean this: *originally*, and God grant forever! your soul consists in just this exuberant meeting of the natural, necessary conditions of life; in just this tumbling, romping, thundering, *cutting-in* to the world-ground! Remove that *ground* condition of life; the *anstoss*, the *shock* of getting born again and again; theorize away the powers that tend to defeat; consider that your channel is eternally established by God and that your only necessity is to flow nicely and peaceably therein with never a bit of coarse-grained evil to be washed away, never so much as a speck of putrefaction to be radically *cleansed away!* Why! that would remove life itself! Such a channel of life would have in it no slightest smack of reality from its source to its mouth!

I can see the soul's case in no other light. A real soul is no ghost of a thing that I can imagine. It is a thing in its destiny true to its ori-

gin, not seeking to destroy its life's impulses, passions and instincts but aiming to compress these into ever better order; to channel them more and more deeply, letting them grow strong, noble, virile, even as God, the universal Life, the world's soul, is growing stronger, viriler, nobler with the on-rolling, in-cutting centuries.

O! of course your incurable rationalist will pounce upon and riddle all this beyond all human recognition. He will make my words to mean *that* when I really mean *this*. You can depend upon it he *will not* understand either me or my words. His case is as hopeless as — my own! Still I must attempt one more statement of this thing I do most solemnly hold for true: a living God in his becoming perfection is no eternal and compulsory, no instantaneous and spectrally conscious entity of goodness; but a persuasive and tender, spontaneous and youthful, yet solemn and commanding spirit of Life — himself living or dying daily in the growth or decay of the souls of us, his human kind. In us he came to be, through us he remains to be seen, in us it doth not yet appear what he shall be. We through him and he through us are eternal,— *provided* we and he meet the condition of life! provided we and he overcome! provided we and he do continuously master the great universe's *anstoss*, do meet masterfully the great world's every *shock* of disaster, defeat, sorrow and disgrace! provided we and he do gain the victory! In any other case what-

soever, we and he, being perishable in our origin, will surely die the death, will surely subside into the great, the very amorphous, the very cosmic, formless Beast whence we and he arose. And what-then? — the unutterable Silence and Fatuity of a metaphysical eternity will set in. Much thus depends upon you, my comrade, and much upon *you*, my Comrade!

## VII

There was a game we used to play, as children. It was called the "wishing-game." It was a zestful, royal, lively game, perennially stimulating and gratifying. To play it we required only a "fairy." Thereby we were permitted to make wishes — not one "stingy" wish merely but as many as we *wished*. I seem to remember however that the game was conditioned and somewhat solemnized at one point: we must always wish for something noble, of high degree; we must want to be great Kings or Queens, great leaders of men in all ways of simplicity, founders of happy families, defenders of homes, and anything else that was good and great and holy. In these circumstances the wishes were supposed to "come true."

Well, we used to play thus, as children. Even now I play the game sometimes with two little children of my own heart; —even now sometimes, when alone, with the great God of my heart! Wish for what you want, now or here-

after, of all that is noble, vital, princely, manly! And somehow out from the invisible, fairlylike being of God's own great and noble humanity it will come true now or hereafter! That's the game.

As children, we did believe in the fairy of our imaginary game. As grown-ups do we, *dare* we, believe in the God of our Game of Life? the great God of our spiritual imagination? the mysterious Presence round about us ready for every motion of our human lives? a Presence whose whole soul is presented for the asking? Dare we believe in *him?* I ask. In manhood's Fairy God?

It is a simple question to ask: "Do you believe in God?" Men of modern mind, as I have so often remarked, are apt to reply: "Why, of course; certainly I believe in God." But I don't mean that. Any fool can believe in the God you are thinking of when you say that. "Why *of course* I believe in God;" as much as to say "Why of course the sun will rise to-morrow: but what time of day is it *now*, you condemned man?"

Once more: Do you belive in God? in him not at all as a matter of course but in him in a practical, playful, childish way? Do you believe in him thus even though men before they really know the awful depth of what you mean will spit scorn in the face of your passionate utterance, reviling you in your very personal and very con-

fidential experience of him you call God-Man, calling you all manner of galling and patronizing names, ridiculing you as a new and latest brand of passionate egotist, a sort of harmless, spiritual libertine? Do you believe that God-Man is? — *is*, I say, right here, right now, right present, right human?

Well, I imagine, you are not quite so sure of that. But so surely as you do not believe just that, just exactly that, no less, you do not fully experience God. You are bowing and scraping before a great monstrous world-idol; — a convenient idol, too; for he can't enter your counting-house and your home to shame your very intolerable practices there. Well, that world-idol will grind you to pieces in the end. He is a God-of-course, a Brute-Energy, no more eternal by nature nor by natural right than a Beast-of-course grunting and puffing in his universal wallow! He will grind you back into star-dust, I tell you! That is his destiny and yours, too, along with him. Just so surely and relentlessly as Fate, your God-of-course is dying, disintegrating, being abolished, returning to the pompous, stiff, petrified, dead inanity he set out from! Go along with him, if you will: you believe in him *of course!*

But the better course, the better way, as I see it, would be to conjoin your energies, your manhoods, with the more romantic, fairy-like, exuberantly childlike Energy I now and henceforth

call God,— not your God-of-course but an invisible God whom it requires vision to see and a mighty will to follow; a Reality-of-God not so obvious as your God-of-course but a Life ever pressing on toward mastery and invisible being just as surely and steadily as Matter, the kingdom of your beastly God-of-course, is sinking toward death and destruction. Lend your life to the larger Life, engage yourself to that in a precious eternal alliance — and live forever, forever! That is the argument, that the condition, that the Life.

Is it not good to live? to live now and *then*?

## VIII

In this spirit one may honorably enter what is called "life after death"— in this *life-after-life* spirit. "What shall we be like 'over there'? " you ask. I make answer: we shall be like *him* then if we are like him now; for we shall see *him* as he is. "Who is this great 'I am'?" you ask. He is the God of the veiled Face, the God of the veiled Manhood. Unveiled, "over there" I hope: but veiled from us over here,— hidden from us by all our sensualities, stupidities, bestialities. But even now you may see his great patient, care-worn, brave Face, if you will but unveil yourself; your everlasting pure and holy self; your soul girt for life's and eternity's battles! just your own homely, splendid, everlasting self! — just *that* is the God of the unveiled, un-

searchable human face,— the Face of human life, the Face of the universe's Manhood, Man-God, God-Man.

Is it good to live, to live now and *then?* Then unveil, O Man! Unveil, O God! to live forever! forevermore! forever *and a day!*

# IV

# PRAYER AND THE MODERN MIND

## I

Most men in these latter days have, as they put the case, broken themselves of the childish habit of prayer and have now ceased to feel its magical strength in their lives. Freed from the errors and dogmatism of their fathers' faith men of the modern mind don't like to pray any more: somehow it is so childlike, so primitive, so *useless*, this customary praying. It is now past believing in.

Does this modern man then disbelieve, say, in God? By no means. He believes in God wholly: somehow a great energy is working its way out in the lives of men. Only a fool can say in his *mind* "There is no God." God is phenomenal, apparent enough. But as to praying! Who can by *that* alter one least movement, one slightest law or purpose of the Great God of things as they have got to be?

Perhaps some of you, my comrades of the open mind, will recall, as do I, the very night when the communing impulse called prayer began to decrease within you; when the Presence, the mythic Companion of your child- and young man-hood, began slipping away from your inner hearth-stone. Ah! but that was a sorry night,

the night when, no longer able to open your grown life sincerely and *whole*-souledly to the larger Life, you for the first time sought sleep in the awful solitude of a prayerless soul. But: "Oh, well" you say, "that is all over, best forgotten now. Since that dreadful night I seem to have fared pretty well as things go in this godless world. My life has become more and more self-sufficient, less and less conscious of any dependence upon another Power than myself. The meaning and spirit of prayer once the source, I grant, of my daily strength and courage — it somehow no longer sinks deep into my soul. Yes, I fare well enough as things go. I am no coward, no sniffler, I am a Man,— godless to be sure but a Man nonetheless."

A prayerless, modern society; men with heroic souls bereaved of God; all private approaches to the great Father-spirit cut off by doubt and hesitation; the soul of God dehumanized, cast out from the habitations of men; great God! a stranger in the world, finding never a simple and natural response to the call of his father-spirit in the hearts of his children,— for we *are* yet his children ingrainedly, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, soul of his soul. Men in their boasted knowledge of Nature's unchanging laws have turned their faces away from the World-Father. Just last night I was reading a letter from a friend of polytechnic education in which he tells me that once when things were going very ill with

him he was constrained to "swear at" this accursed God of physics. This man's science had erected in the place of a once living and friendly God a monstrous deaf and dumb idol of things as they have got to be. It is even so; the experience of a living God is gone in these days of superior knowledge and of desolating doubt. Perhaps never to return?

Here is what William James says on the point:

"Few men of science can pray, I imagine. Few can carry on any living commerce with 'God.' Yet many of us are well aware how much freer in many directions and abler our lives would be, were such important forms of energizing not sealed up."

II

"Were such important forms of energizing not sealed up"! Most of my readers will be familiar with the impediment of science whereby these great springs of human energy have been dammed up and prevented from flowing in their natural course with the deeper currents of being. This modern scepticism of prayer is very unlike the scepticism of a generation or so ago. *That* doubted the very existence of God: *this* on the contrary *over*believes in him! The modern mind believes in God tremendously! Is his great being not *obvious* on all sides, the Great God of the countless stars? Something like sixty billion of them, we are told, are subject to this God-Power. His energy is present in the world with

terrific intensity: release it, if only you could, from its potential imprisonment in a single drop of water and, once more we are told, you could move by this released power all the machinery of all the workshops over the civilized world. Great is God! Great and monstrous withal! "Surely" this late septicism of prayer argues "a God of such prowess and majesty is concerned chiefly in the *machinizing* of his infinite workshop, in fitting with stars the endless expanse of the heavens. Chiefly in *that* rather than in the conserving and cherishing of human things like you and me." God only knows how many men in these days have caught this vision of his awful power, majesty and dignity. But I think there are many who have said in their hearts "Oh, God, we acknowledge thee, spirit of the great world and its heavens. Great is thy power, thy majesty how surpassing all our human measurements and imaginations! Great thou art beyond all the childish beliefs of our fathers. In the rumbling and inexorable *rush* of thy matchless world-work thou canst not hear nor, hearing, heed the feeble petitions rising from human lips. How *small* indeed is this human, whirling planet among thy sixty odd billion of such."

Yes; men in these days believe terrifically in God, acknowledge their *hopeless* dependence upon him, revere him in his surpassing power, worship his majesty. But they have dumbed in conse-

quence the great, infinite heart of tenderness and love they once imaged in God. They can no longer utter the child's cry for help, the simple prayer out of a child's daily needs and trials, errors and sins. We sink our souls in the great on-pushing energy round about us. We hush all our human longings for divine companionship and stand silent and lonely under the star-strewn heavens; looking up in the attitude of prayer, it may be, but with lips stiffened and struck dumb by the vision of power and dignity there above our heads. Even so, in time we forget altogether that hour of evening devotion in which, as children, we were able to pray to God, simply and freely touching the things, the mistakes, disappointments, passions, sins, of the day just gone by; praying with a full sense of God's *Presence;* nothing doubting, for was the Presence not *there,* understanding, strengthening, forgiving, companioning? Yes, he seemed to be there then, but not now. Now, the great Father-Spirit is dead! *The great Father-Spirit is dead,* I tell you. Men and women, great pathetic *hordes* of them are standing in the world hopeless, powerless, prayerless, dumb, like sheep forsaken of their shepherd, mere beasts in the fields of God's world.

And the proof of all this is at hand, is easily found out. It needs but a simple question. How many of *you,* comrades of the modern

mind, have prayed in the day, or in the year, or in what time soever, just gone by? Not many of you in these latter days, I think.

## III

It would be very easy to refute men's arguments against prayer; it is in fact a pathetic fallacy that has led them to doubt God because of the very power and *being* which alone would justify faith in him. What boots your childish belief in God's goodness, sympathy, love and all else human, unless God *be* indeed? unless his being *be* in very truth just what your adult science makes it out to be: world-wide, ever-present, *mindful? Surely God's bigness does not prevent his goodness and love?* We would not judge a *dog* in *that* way. It often happens that the larger your dog is, the more watchful and affectionate is he toward those he holds in his care. Can it be then that this God who grips in his care the very dead planets, whose substance holds and feels the fall of the tiniest, fluttering sparrow, is unmindful, unwatchful of you and me? of you and me who best of all the creatures of his world can enter into and become a living part of his divine life? Surely this is the position of those who have never actively entered the larger Life, who have never worked with God in his world, who do not know God in the way of *practice*, in the way of life. This thing is, not to *demonstrate* God: that is easy enough! but to *prove* him; not to

*qualify* God ponderously but to *live* him joyously; not to chart him as he moves in the distant heavens but to speak him friendlily as he passes in your way of life.

## IV

Anyway, argument is futile in all such vital cases. Let the logicians and metaphysicians wrangle with the scientist over this matter of praying. My purpose is otherwise. It is merely to impress a fact upon you, friend, in case you have come to this modern mind's prayerless belief in God: the man who knows God only as external prowess does not really know him. You would know God, as he genuinely and really is, or perhaps *ought* to be? as you *want* him to be? as you *hope* he is in that unseen soul of him beneath all his visible, earthly and beavenly powers? Then you must mythologize and humanize God! You must feel the great invisible powers of the universe concentrated upon and in *you*, God connected in some most vital and inward way with the daily deeds and nightly aspirations of your human life. All argument aside then! The simple fact is that no man can put away from himself this in some sort childlike sense of a God's friendly presence in his own working life without losing in time his very belief in God. On this we must be clear: an external, prayerless thought of God, though it be in fact never so *knowing*, is unutterably inferior

to a practical, prayerful, mystic *belief* in him. It is an amazing phenomenon in human history, the attempt of metaphysic and theologic science to keep alive in the great ocean of being a God around whose soul they have hung like mill-stones all their weighty arguments and ponderous infinitudes. The mythologists, as I have hinted, the humanists, the religionists of humanity, have shown a superior instinct in their experience of God as Man, or of Man as God (whichever you prefer). In any case they have preserved the God of real human life; a God who lives and loves in the region of human being; in whom his awful infinitudes, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and such, are not methaphysic but practical, not even infinite if by that you mean *done*, but rather finite and active, once more, in the habitations and souls of men; *human*, in short.

v

After all these wise old metaphysicians and *doctors* of sacred theology are not really expert in divinity. Those rather are expert, as I take it, who have *discovered* God to men, who in some very real sense have actually *seen* God face to face, as Man to man, as Friend to friend.

In a word those *know* God most immediately and intimately who in *saintliless* or in *sinfulness* have tapped the very sources of his living being. All other knowledge of That we call God is

mediate and inferential. In truth *divinity* is not so much a matter of knowledge as of *friendship*: we infer the friendliness of our life's closest companion, say, the fatherliness of our father, from external marks and gifts, until that solemn moment when through some act of unwonted faithfulness or unfaithfulness on our part we come to feel overwhelmingly the eternal *spirit* of love out of which through the years all these gifts and expressions of love have poured forth. Then do we really know, and yet not rightly know but rather *sense*, the deeps of our friend, our father. It is so with scientific and theologic knowledge of God: it is in the main external, inferential, doctoral. There is a plenty of scientists and philosophers who live in an outwardly friendly relation with the universal energy or spirit they condescend to call God: such a God is universely prolific! a splendid provider! full of rich gifts, unconsciously bestowed! But this external friendship with God becomes internal and remains an eternal demand in that soul only which, having completed its world-wide account of God's powers and beneficences, has at last received this world-wide spirit of God within the sacred precincts of its own most intimate hopes and longings and aspirations. I have known a few such scientific and yet intimate communicants with God: one of them loves a little child; another grieves for a life removed by sudden and

tragic death from his hearth-stone; another met God when on his way with his once brilliant son to a neighboring mad-house.

The God of the hearth-stone, God of the world-home! He is God indeed; the *inward* source of all human patience, hopefulness, love, righteousness, the exhaustless soul of all human courage and wisdom. The God who cares! whose manna-machine does, it is true, incessantly pour down food for the body from the heavens above — infer God from *that*, you men of knowing temper! but whose soul of humanity is pouring forth here in the homes of men such gifts to the soul as courage, hardihood, tenderness, Manhood — become God in *that*, you men of mystic temper!

The God who cares! He it is who may and must be prayed to.

May be prayed to, for he is above all else a humane spirit, is God. His world-soul may thus touch ours, his life enter into and renew ours, his purposes become one and whole in ours, his Life *live* in ours. Place your human against his human, interfuse your life with his; share with him your shame and your sin, your strength and your joy, your goods and your evil; speak him friendlily as his great world-spirit passes your way, I say. Pray! And, see, your God almighty, your inferential infinitudes, will become a living, friendly reality. Henceforth the blow that falls on you falls on him equally; the sin

that debases you ruins him equally; the good cheer, courage, manliness, self-expression and self-offering that enter and dignify your life enter equally his and further his own eternal Man-impulses and Man-passions. In *you!* I say, — do I perhaps say it too often and too simply? for men think you can't talk of God other than ponderously and pompously — nay, in *you* God *becomes;* in that great humanity that sometimes shrieks out in the night with the very agony of its infinite pain in growing, in that Man beyond yourself, the great God lives and moves and has his being. To this Man-God, though to none other, a man may pray.

And *must* pray too. See how intimately personal, mutual, reciprocal, social, friendly this relation of God with man is! So intimate is it that somehow spirit *must* make known to spirit the needs and demands and aspirations of each. *Com*muning of spirit with spirit — and that is praying essentially and inwardly — cannot be *one*-sided. There would be no touch, no feeling, no understanding, in that. I know of no more presposterous *theory* of prayer than that which affirms that God knows our needs in an eternity before ever we felt the same. Preposterous, theoretic *non*-sense! Why, my friend, those needs didn't even exist, they most certainly were not, until you felt them. Once I read an account of an old woman, a senile dement, who spent her last days ministering to the imaginary

wants of a senseless, stuffed doll. She was not unlike your God, and you not unlike the limp, dumb lump of a doll, my friend, if you press your theory of prayer too far! Nay, God in his world-old life is still young and spontaneous in his inner springs; he in his exuberant Life "rejoices as a strong Man to run a race"; he is still growing in humanity, is still in *intelligent* contact with your human life. The relation between him and you is a *live articulate* matter. When you stir he stirs; when you want, he wants; when you cry, he pauses in his busy way; when you open the flood gates of your soul his influence does most actively come. All this *when* you pray, when you become in some way articulate before God; but not sooner, I think. God must and may be prayed to; spirit *answering* spirit, that is prayer.

Let us agree upon any explanation you will of this contact between our human and God's human spirit. Call it supersensible, telepathic, subconscious, or by what term soever you choose. Such terms do explain in the right direction: silent, wordless prayer is more efficient than prayers from the mouth. Only don't confuse the principle of communion. Round about and within each of us is a great, indubitable, indomitable Soul, a consciously, humanly sensitive Spirit, conserving us with all its might, guiding us with all its power, speaking our spirits with the infinite tenderness and pathos of its own

soul of triumphing righteousness. And there is only one way in which the human soul may inwardly acknowledge and know that sustaining power, consciously follow that friendly leadership, inwardly hear the divine call: the way of wordless prayer. Wordless but not senseless, wordless but not inarticulate is this prayer of the full, human life. In his quiet hours of praying *thus* the devout man's soul is infinitely expressive: he lays bare before the humane soul of God, as he cannot before any other living soul, the eternal wants of his spirit and feels a Presence passing that way strengthening, comforting, reassuring; persuading him that these eternal needs, these untiring aspirations of his human soul are infinite, living passions in the very soul of God. He and God move together in prayer; in prayer he and God face together the eternal way.

Don't say then that a man must not pray over his daily needs, trials and errors and sins; for whatsoever things concern a man infinitely concern the God-Man infinitely, too. We stand facing a world in which our knowledge is perverted by brute-facts, our lives are altered and cultivated in time by the changing seasons of a world's progress. We grow and are infinite, are majestic, only in that progress, in that pushing-forth into being, in that entering into an unformed and unknown eternity. But the spirit of God moves and grows infinite and majestic

in that same world and in that same way of progress: his spirit knows no more than the great world as it now is and is becoming, the great infinitely possible world of real life.

And so the prayer that asks for more life, more light, more strength is to the very soul of God the signal of life, the motion of a new birth of spirit within his Life, the opening of a new soul to the unending possibilities of becoming alive. We men must cease to pray for trifles as if they were the eternal verities of life; we must consider more and more what *are* life's lasting dignities; we must yield graciously to the life and wisdom of a Great Spirit surrounding us, the loving Leader of our lives; we must learn to labor with this larger Life, to practice the Presence of the Man in us, the God in him; we must believe in the answering love and wisdom of the Whole. Then after this great discipline of soul a grown man like you and me here may pray to the Spirit of God, each saying in the silence of his soul "I cannot live, I cannot be, I cannot work without this gift of thy love and life. More Light! more Life! more Love!" And the answer will come in your life; somehow all the conditions of life will become gracious and blessed and *strong*; one's soul of prayer will have come to know on earth something of the eternal joy of the spirit's own invisible world-home — out there and in here, beyond and beneath all the conditions of beastly

time and beastly space. This is the principle of prayer: the retirement of the human into the divine spirit, the human into the divine Life; the call of the undisciplined soul of a man to the disciplined yet like soul of God.

Really to *see*, really to yield to this living argument of a larger yet like-minded Life, to be unafraid of its Presence, to be unashamed to call it "God" and to stand nobly in his Light, to be frankly mystic, to pray simply yet in the strength of your grown-up manhood — that is your supremest vocation, O Man! "What is God that thou are mindful of him?" you ask. God, believe me, is infinitely more than all-mighty, infinitely more than all-wise, infinitely more than *in-himself*, infinitely more than what qualities soever your tedious and monstrous science of God may picture him to be. *God is not divine* — not in his right arm of avenging power nor yet in his perfect mind of fatal knowledge. *God is divine* — in that very heart and centre of him, in those unconditioned affections where even he, as God is! is dependent upon you and me, upon our love and faithfulness and strong manhood, upon our working with him in his great enterprises of love in the world, laboring with him in his world-wide vineyard, home-making with him in his great world-home. No! God is no chief artificer — not *that* chiefly, I mean; he is no wise One merely, seeing all clearly and ordering all fatally. God is a presence of humanity, a

spirit of human strength and humane love like you and me, living under all the conditions of human trial and affection; unlike us only in this: in his age-long, storm-centered Life he has even now gained unspeakably in patience, in courage, in hopefulness and in all those *splendid* infinities you and I are staggering and working toward. It is only in the opening out in prayer of our human hearts in *that* way that his spirit and Life of divine bravery and love can enter and chasten, strengthen, stir, comfort and protect our littler lives.

VI

This is the method and spirit, you will find, of those who have *seen* God, the saints and sinners who have *found* him in life's ways.

As to the saints. Spending their lives from beginning to end in simple trustfulness, finding God's face as familiar as the stars, his Presence as certain as the everlasting hills, these passionately faithful men spend their days in a kind of perpetual communion with God; they fail not for a moment to rest confidingly in the larger Life; they always feel around about and within their human lives the very spirit and presence of a living God. How they prize the friendly walk with God, this constant turning and looking to the Eternal for strength and guidance! Well, it *is* a very wonderful and convincing sense of God's presence; a communion with the Unseen, they tell us, so enduring and withal so practically

human that all the hard and dark places of the world, one is sure somehow, are not eternally hard and dark at all: they are just places of trial, it may be even unto death, but out of which every human soul must eventually escape into the light and comfort of God's presence, into the larger Life, into the sweet serenity of the Father's strong soul. *This*, because they have seen the veiled face of God, they say, and have beheld that time-worn divine countenance all aglow with human sympathies, all firm and patient and hopeful, as if he were *determined* with a great, divine strength and resolution to prevail over all our human destinies, to bless all our human lives, to put into our faltering human souls something of the force, the resolution, the righteousness, the *iron-like love* of his own unconquerable humanity. What wonder that they are glad and confident, these men of prophetic vision and saintly lives! Do they not walk daily with a great Companion, an incurably human *God?*

This is the sort of walk you and I may have with God, if only we too will have the courage to believe in the ever-present *reality* of God in every place and time of our human life. Thus to know God we must learn — yes, learn, for it is not easy at first — to pray, to practice the presence of God. This is praying, I think: to pause in the midst of some very practical, some very worldly occupation when perhaps the im-

pulse to hastiness, ungenerosity, dishonesty is upon us, or when some great and lowering passion of the inner life is tearing us asunder — to pause, I say, and remember that underlying all the heat and passion of life there is still the great Spirit of the living God. In his friendly, *manly* presence the narrowing temptation becomes so frail, the grip upon us of passion so slight that in that solemn moment of wordless prayer we find ourselves once more men! strong in the consciousness of a larger Life manning ours.

In this wordless prayer, in this simple walking with God even in the heat of one's daily temptations and passions, in this unconscious praying to God from street to street as one mingles with the prayerless crowds of men and women, in this ever-ready spirit of prayer there is a quality unspeakably enduring and purifying. To practice the presence of God! How it clears one's vision! how it sweetens and deepens one's life! how it infuses into one's daily rounds of business, of trial and error, of successes and failures, a still perpetually chanting joy! In some mysterious way — why not by the very spirit of a living God in the world-home of men? — this man's constant vision is contagious! In all its clearness and cleanness and joy that man's sense of God catches in the lives and hearts of all his fellows: they too feel, they know not why, that somehow the world is good, somehow God is!

That man, transfigured in the light of a God's humane Presence, is apt to draw all men up to him.

I like to think that the great throbbing Life round about us is comforted by the presence in its world-soul of such faithful sons and daughters. Natural parts they are of that larger Life: their constant dependence upon, and faithful obedience to the deeper currents of the diviner Life is as simple and steady as God's own soul of goodness and love itself. A perfect, natural communion of the human with the divine Life; man a faithful reflection of God; God a present Companion of man. Even so man discovers God, sees him beyond argument and yet beyond doubt face to face, Man to man, Friend to friend; an unfailing vision of divine Manhood, a perfect union of man and God, all life a faithful expression of a great God-Man! Blessed are these pure in heart, for they have seen God.

## VII

As to sinners. For there are those to whom the divine-human face of the world's soul is not ever present and familiar. They are men blinded and deceived in ways of evil, from whom the humaner face of the world's self is veiled by the shadow of the world's brutalities and monstrosities. The theologians describe such as "convicted of sin." The more artistic of these sinners have in all ages portrayed hells and devils

to mar men's more mystic visions of heavens and gods. They in their way have sounded being as *deeply* as the saints we were just celebrating. Only they have seen things perversely, baldly, unmystically. They too have seen a soul of things face to face, Man to man, Fiend to fiend.

There is an oriental vision I once read and have not easily forgotten meanwhile. It is the vision of a man (Arguna) who is about to enter into a great battle. The outcome of the impending fray he knows not. It may well mean his death. So he prays to his God (Vishnu) for a full vision of his divine being, to see his god face to face, ere he should die. Then the vision comes of a great *world-beast*: a great "swallower of the other gods," "of countless forms possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides," "having" indeed "a mouth like a blazing fire, and heating the universe with his radiance," "of wonderful and terrible form," with "groups of gods entering into him," "with a gaping mouth and with large blazing eyes," revealing a mouth of "terrible, fearful and horrific jaws resembling the fire of destruction" with human heads "smashed" and "stuck in the spaces between the teeth;" men like moths entering a blazing fire are entering his mouth "to their destruction;" "swallowing all these people" this God of horrific mien is "licking them over and over again from all sides with blazing mouths;" a god whose "fierce

splendors filling the whole universe with their effulgence are heating it"; god of "death," the "destroyer of worlds."

A god of death and destruction indeed! the image of lowered bestial manhood; the very antithesis in all regards of the Man-God vision of the more saintly souls of the world. Such a vision of God with a cosmic hell as his environment is but the enlarged image of many a man's inner soul; a human soul of fierce and self-destroying impulses glimpsed on a world-wide scale; man creating a God-Beast in his own image; man meeting God face to face, Man to man, Fiend to fiend, as I have said.

This, or some other of no less horrific mien is the vision encountered sooner or later by men who become depressed by the powers of evil in the world. And such powers are plentiful enough, God knows: disease; anger; unbrotherliness; idiocy; senility; concupiscence; dishonesty in high places; men losing their souls through abuses of the body and of the spirit; every man's hand, it would seem, turned against his own soul and that of his brother; unmanhood and bestiality, in short.

Men, or their sons and daughters, not infrequently go mad in these paths of unrighteousness. Ignorance, over-work, folly, soul-abuse, these are all forms of immorality; they all are forms of *un*wisdom. To avoid them requires not that a man be educated in the schools; they are

violations merely of a man's natural instincts, his mother-wit, his mother-wisdom in truth. And they have their reward in the modern visions of a psychic hell. Recently I had a letter from an alienist who tells me that practically every case of insanity is brought on by the sin or folly of the deranged soul himself or of some of his forebears.

Folly and sin, these, just as surely as wisdom and righteousness, have their reward: sinners inwardly beget *their* hell and its fiend just as surely as saints inwardly catch the vision of heaven and its god. Men's *lives* pray more practically than their words, their secret thoughts than their open professions. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he; and even so is his god, too.

Say what you will, you idealists and æsthetes, you have no closet deep enough to conceal in every part the skeleton of the world's archfiend. The Devil is no anatomical monstrosity, I grant. I agree with you in your animadversions against the crude forms in which the primitive man's fears clothed the powers of darkness of the world. Disembody the devil, by all means! But he remains,— invisible, psychic, powerful; indeed in all his unseen powers closely akin to the *god* of your idealistic thought. "Strike, strike, in the name of God." Work against these desolating powers, these evils, these sins. Throttle and utterly destroy this invisible world-fiend! Else his poison will spread and spread, from father to son,

from individual to society, from generation to generation, from planet to planet till the death-power thereof shall enter and madden and destroy the very soul of God!

I walked one day in a beautiful way. God seemed there. My heart sang a song in major key. Almost I was persuaded to become an idealist of absolute faith. Evil seemed so powerless, so unreal, so remote withal. But I met an idiot in the way! His deformed,— nay, his *destroyed* — manhood, was not "good in the making." *He was hell.*

But sinners have been known to escape this hell, to replace with a vision of God the horrific features of this invisible world-fiend. They have spent indeed long dreary years in prayerless doubt of the very existence of any eternal courage and goodness, and pity and love in the world. But one day they have roused themselves with a mighty oath! and have struck out against these evil powers and visions! — against them have opposed the simple powers of their own inward Manhood! Man against devil then! And, behold, the evil things have vanished like the howling winds of the night and the lonely fighter has found himself a very god.

A very god, I say. Fighting there in the darkness was praying in its effect. That sinner-man in his triumphant Manliness finds in himself a *beyond-himself*. He places his poor frightened, maddened self in the larger and deeper currents

of God's self, the world's soul; and finds it *with him*. He prays. Thus praying in action he gropes his way back into the light of the divine face of things. And he sees this goodly face of God with a new and deeper insight born of his awful experience of evil and darkness and madness in the world; he sees something of infinite pity, something of divine patience and sorrow, something of infinite humanity in the time-worn and world-weary face of his God. Praying thus, he sees the God-life all seared and marred and scarred with the battles and wounds of life; he sees the great strong soul of God all sensitive and quivering with the wants and hopes and struggles of humanity's life. Finding this way of prayer he cries, full and glad and triumphant: "I behold within, I *am*, the infinite person and heart of God. O God, I come, I come." And of a certainty God meets him there in the darkness face to face, as Man to man, as Friend to friend.

VIII

As Friend to friend, that is the point. In hours of failure, in times of soul-weariness after hard and defeated struggle against the influence of the evil powers in his inner life, then even a grown man like you and me may pray, may rest his soul in the comprehending soul of the world, the infinite Father of all earth's humaner religions. So we shall recover courage and strength for the morrow. And then we must once more arise! and

build! A practice of prayer that needs no articulate utterance: it sees directly the manly, friendly person of God, its own beyond-self, its own larger Life, the great universe's communism with humanity.

As Man to man, that is the point. In hours of strong and vigorous manhood, but when the way of life is not clear, when your man's deepest searching of his inner soul brings no light and you know not whither stretches the onward road nor where the region of the larger Life; then again this way of prayer is opened. You pray, — or call it what you will. You do naturally open your life to the larger Life and — somehow the light, the guidance, the vision perfect, clear, unmistakable *comes* straightway: you know, nay, you are most actually *in* the deep currents of the universe's own righteousness in this hour, most fittingly called, of prayer.

Pray then to God! unafraid and unashamed, pray! Speak to the larger life as naturally and as simply as you would talk to yourself. Praying *is* that essentially, God is chiefly just that: your deeper self, your larger Life. He is *you!* Man alive, God is just you! in the making; you! in possession of all the powers of the world and all the experience of the ages. Possess yourself then! possess yourself of all these beyond-human powers and experiences and go *praying* and chanting on your way of righteous manhood! By praying *so* a strong man may gain all the

marvelous insights of the larger Life, the God-Life.

Praying in such wise does secure all the riches of God's own being and love. The God of human life, the great Man-God by a perfect instinct, a superlative — may I say, telepathic? — sensitiveness to all things human, does indeed feel the prayers of men who stand in, most literally *in* his Presence girt, ready to receive and obey the commands of this living and friendly and righteous God.

# V

# THE UNKNOWN GOD

## I

The supremest vocation of the preacher and priest in all ages and in all religions has been to reveal to their people the unknown God underlying all their speculations and aspirations, to charge with vitality the region of a man's doubts and unholy superstitions. It is profoundly impressive to reflect upon the great scriptures of men, the documents in which the ages' geniuses have sought to lift the veil of mystery which surrounds the human life. One is moved not so much by the rudeness or, as the case may be, the pathetic cleverness with which the human soul has solved its mysteries; he is challenged rather by the startling fact itself that on this borderland of mystery where there is no knowledge to guide the human life the soul of man has been most heroically alive to the eternal verities, most faithfully and splendidly aware of the divine life. It would seem to be the peculiar mystery of this unknowable God surrounding the human spheres that, while he defeats with his everlasting "No" all the conjectures and hypotheses of logical men, yet with his everlasting "Yes" he receives and confirms all the advances and beliefs of the childlike mind. The same God who seems to stiffen and threaten

under the assaults of men's conceits of knowledge is tenderly attentive to the unconscious wants of the very animals and children of the world. The same God who seems to move relentlessly and majestically in the heavens above dwells in innocency and simplicity within the spirits of the pure in heart. A profound mystery, this! It is surely in the region of God's unseen being that we shall find the point of reconciliation between the mystery of God's unthinkable immensity and the mystery of his childlike simplicity.

We must sooner or later face consciously and honorably this region of eternal mystery which has surrounded men in all ages, and within which they have erected their altars to unknown gods. It is in a most profound degree a region of mystery and its god in a very real sense a Great Unknown. In the infinite depths out beyond the most distant fixed star there is nothing but mystery! deep within your inmost soul, in the infinite soul-abyss underlying all your daily trials and passions, nothing but mystery!

## II

One day I witnessed a strange experiment in the laboratory of an expert chemist. He warned me away from a spot near which he was preparing his experiment, but where my inquiring eye could see nothing. Yet he assured me that was the most real and active point in the entire region of his strange experiment. Then he grasped a wire

of the toughest known metal and thrust it into this region, and instantly it coiled and curled and melted into *nothing*. And nowadays, when I observe men thrusting their hard and monstrous definitions into the region of God's great, active, unseen *white-hot* life, I seem to see their inquisitive definitions coiling and twisting and melting into sheer *nothing*.

Nor is this the complaint of a rude *un*belief in the Unseen. Rather is it the protest of a tender mysticism which, blinded by the intense light from the invisible countenance of God, henceforth shrinks from a too familiar approach to his great white throne. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" "O Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief," "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," "To think that God is as we can think him to be is blasphemy",— these and ten thousand similar cries bespeak a soul which has faced the eternal mystery of God and has returned to life unconceited and undishonored; for it does not claim to have seen when its eyes were blinded, nor to have heard when its ears were deafened, nor to have understood when its judgment was paralyzed by its direct, instant contact with this infinitely mysterious and unknown God.

## III

I wonder if we have not touched here the secret of losing one's life in order to find it in God. There are many things men were wont to sacrifice

on their altars to an unknown God — their fruits, their beasts, their sons, daughters, and wives, their own bodies to be burned. But such burnt offerings somehow failed to satisfy the needs of their own worshipping souls, nor yet the invisible demands of their unknown divinity. Then men came to a nearer insight into the longings of their own souls and into the needs of the divine life. God requires of a man only that he shall love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with his God; that he sell all that he has and give to the poor; a sacrificing of one's wealth and ambitions, a placing upon the altar an utterly broken spirit and contrite heart. But now as a last and inexhaustible demand of the Great God Beyond it seems that he who would know God must sacrifice on the altar the very instruments of knowledge itself, his very intelligence, his very soul, his very self! so majestic and so infinitely real are the purposes and longings of the divine life. Without conceit of knowledge, without dishonor of mind, without pollution of soul, a man must face the Unknown Eternal and cry: "Oh, thou great Unknown, accept now my supreme sacrifice. Longing above all else to know thee, I yet destroy my instruments of knowing. In this supreme hour of self-sacrifice, not knowing thee, I yet yield my life to thine eternity in the simple faith that thou art, and with the insatiable demand that thou shalt be good and brave and beautiful. Soul of my soul, bless now my life." And in this

hour of supreme soul-sacrifice the life of God, the infinite Good Will, reveals itself in the human life with an overmastering intensity: one is lifted above all his natural longings, above all his daily ends, beyond his practical, knowing self into the invisible home of God. Out beyond the most distant star there is nothing, only mystery, nothing only God! Deep within your own soul-abyss there is nothing, only mystery, nothing only God!

## IV

A man's soul thus tested and tempered by the invisible fire on his altar to an unknown God, no longer withers and shrinks when extended in the direction of the hidden God of the ages. Rather does such a soul grow and glow with something of the everlasting enthusiasm and divine health of God's own unseen life. His poor purposes in some mysterious way gain all the reality and dignity of the divine life, his hopes somehow contribute to and are strengthened by the divine hope, his courage by direct ways partakes of the perfect courage with which God himself faces unafraid his own eternal life. All that one can ask of purity of heart and in honesty of mind comes straightway and unasked out of the heart and mind of God into the heart and mind of that man. God appears as the infinite fulfiller of all our own high wishes, the satisfier of all our eternal demands.

There is a subtle argument in a recent play,

entitled "The Servant in the House," a meaning which, I imagine, exceeds the conscious intention of the author himself. In an early scene the Christ spirit is represented as hovering about a young girl, Mary by name, whose tender and pure life is just ripening into conscious womanhood. The spirit of Christ urges Mary to wish hard for the one thing her life most needs. She replies naturally that she does not believe in such a game of wishing. The Christ replies that she *must* wish and must believe that her wish will come true. The sole condition of the wishing game is that her wish shall go deep, deep down into her life. In such deep, soul-searching wishing nothing is too good to be true. The soul's disinterested demands upon reality find their fulfilment in very truth.

Mary agrees to play this game of wishing. Then for the first time in her young life she searches for the thing her soul most needs. Once more the Christ spirit broods over her, and there grows upon her the sense that her life requires most of all a father who shall be good and brave and beautiful. And so she wishes, she *demands* outright, that her life shall receive this new dimension of father-love, that her deep need shall be fulfilled in a living father who should be in truth brave and good and beautiful. Then the scene changes, and the form of struggling fatherhood appears before her. His face is unclean, his hair unkempt, and his body all knotted and gnarled

with the toils of life. For years his life has staggered under a secret sorrow: he has been in danger of losing his soul in the agony of his unspoken loneliness. But the one eternal, infinite thing in his being is his love of his little child and his longing for her presence in his life. This unknown man is in reality Mary's father. She gazes a while into his seemingly unlovely, untrue, unbrave face and discovers his secret grief, his wordless longing for his lost child. She comforts him and then tells him of her own wish for a father who should be good and true and beautiful. Instantly the father spirit rises and responds to this image of goodness, bravery, and beauty as he appears in his child's eye of faith. In the sunlight of this child's high expectation even his fatherliness mysteriously ripens into a deeper dignity. Finally after the scene has changed, the father spirit having resolved to sacrifice his own soul's love and to face his life bravely, manfully, and even without his child's answering presence and love, Mary, gazing into the marred and subdued face of this mighty, unknown man, recognizes the noble father of her soul-searching wish, a Man strong and brave and beautiful.

Thus, perhaps unconsciously, does the genius of this strong drama reach the point of contact between the unknown God and the child of his inner longing. There is this answering of soul to soul in the relationship of God and man. The unseen God of the Great Beyond answers from the depths

within our souls every noble wish, every honorable demand of our human life. The divine character which defies all definition is as sensitive and plastic as the soul of a little child. Our humanity and God's divinity, our sonship and his fatherliness are in the deepest and most literal sense mutual. The invisible God, putting forever behind himself the perfect peace and silence of eternity, takes on our struggling and clamorous humanity, responds patiently, gladly, to all our upward and outward reaching passions. And, in thus finding and furthering you and me, the unknown God finds and furthers his own living soul. Henceforth for all eternity the highest reach of our sonship touches and moves to the quick the deeps of his fatherliness. Each advance we make in the direction of purity and love is met and furthered by an answering wave of divine character and of divine love from within the invisible soul of the unknown God. Henceforth and for all time you and I fulfil a place in the universal heart and life of the unknown divinity: each of us by his faithfulness may soothe or by his unfaithfulness may intensify the great void of life aching within the divine being. There is within the unsearchable depths of the world's soul a divine uneasiness of spirit: it cannot rest until you and I and all men recognize in that unseen soul beneath and beyond the time-worn face of God all that is brave and good and beautiful.

The evangelical theology argues that the Father requires a Son to fulfil his nature. In this it builds more wisely than it knows. The sons of God complete his nature in a most literal and intimate sense. In relieving the exquisite, undefined pain of unrequited love in the divine heart of things we men add to the Father a new dimension of conscious purpose, a purpose of human righteousness which henceforth transcends all the physical world-creating impulses of God's cosmic life. The hour of your soul sacrifice upon the altar of this unknown God of cosmos is the hour of the Father's soul realization; the place where your soul finds rest in God is the place where God's soul finds rest in you; the time when your spirit is lost in God's immensity is the time when God's simplicity is found in you. It is the hour and place of perfect atonement and peace; the condition under which the unknown God, invisible in his power and character, faces with and through you all the desert places even beyond the stars and all the waste places in human souls, and causes them to blossom and fructify through all time. The mystery which surrounds the world and human life is God in all simplicity, in all mightiness, in all expectancy: it is all alive with the invisible, divine character and love — man and God mutually conscious each in the other. The great beyond is filled with God's invisible patience.

the untiring hopefulness, the glad braveness, the perfect honorableness and righteousness of spirit in which the divine life inhabits eternity.

*Beyond the most distant star there is nothing save mystery and God and eternity! Within the soul-abysses of human life, underlying all your daily trials and passions and sins nothing save mystery and God and eternity!*

# VI

# THE INVISIBLE HUMANITY OF GOD

## I

There is one conviction of the inner life to which we men of religion must commit our spirits absolutely and unreservedly. It is the sense of God's real presence in our human lives. Men have defined the spirit of God in a thousand ways. A man of science seeks an adequate expression of God in terms of physical majesty: God is the infinite energy present in unthinkable intensity in the great teeming cosmos round about us. The man of philosophy expresses God in terms of spiritual majesty: God is infinite Spirit interpenetrating and transfiguring the machine we call the world. The man of sorrow finds God a spirit acquainted with grief; the man of joy, a spirit of infinite gladness; the man discouraged by the hard pressure of life upon him finds in God a spirit of infinite restfulness and unconquerable confidence; the man of unholy passion attains some day in God a life of perfect purity; the man of impatient spirit, a life of infinite patience. And so the tender life of God unfolds itself in infinite ways in the lives of us human beings.

II

Now, it is the *genuineness*, the reality and certainty of this divine presence in our human life that I want to make clear in these moments of our meditation together. I have known many wavering men who have felt this world-old call of the divine life in their souls but who have been either too timid or too perplexed to yield to its eternal pressure upon their lives. In their timidity of spirit they have seemed to themselves to be unworthy of the divine presence, unable to live every moment unashamed in the sight of God. Or they have been too perplexed by the rudeness and crudeness of the world of men round about them to believe that humanity is indeed and in truth the garment of a great inner divinity.

Yet this timidity and confusion of spirit always fade away in the light of a great experience of God. In meditation upon the presence of God in the human race, in meditation upon the saintly men and women who all through the ages have trusted in God and were not ashamed, in meditation upon the burning, commanding spirit of God discovered by those who have stood upon mounts of vision far above men and worlds of men — one cannot doubt that God is! Our timidity becomes childish, our perplexity merely a defect of our poor, finite humanity. One may at last overcome this childishness and finiteness

of his humanity and himself stand forth in the light of the ages, stand forth like a man! In this great experience of the infinite spirit of God a man discovers for the first time and for all eternity that his own human manhood is everlastingly justified and dignified by the infinite and invisible Manhood of God.

We ought to be very quiet and reverent and solemn now, for here we stand in the presence of one of the everlasting mysteries of God. Here we may learn in silent meditation the way of the great overbrooding spirit of God. It is not the way of childish timidities nor of hopeless perplexities of spirit. We must learn, sooner or later, that the great spirit of God cannot yield itself wholly to our human life, cannot wholly put on the perfect humanity for which the infinite heart of God is eternally crying out until the human spirit at whose portals the divine spirit is ever waiting calls out openly, honestly and manfully "O God, if thou be, enter my life and make it wholly thine; make it infinitely pure, infinitely alive to that life of triumphant righteousness and love in which alone thy divine life can realize its infinite humanity." Lay bare your spirit before this living God, put aside the very sandals of your soul and stand naked in spirit and unashamed in the presence of God and the great spirit of God will surround and invade your being with an almost terrifying certainty. The timidity and perplexity of your earlier search

for God will remain only as the memory and symbol of your own imperfect humanity. You will have learned for all eternity the invisible, unconquerable humanity of God.

This, I say, is the eternal mystery of the divine life: that in the very hour when the human soul gives itself up absolutely to the awful infinity of God's being it comes to know something of the infinite humanity of God. In abandoning one's self wholly to the being of God one finds that in an infinitely mysterious way the divine life is human, that the very inmost being of God is reaching out infinitely toward all that is deepest and intensest and noblest in the life we call human. The soul's communion with God when the spirit of God unobstructed by human hesitations and withdrawals completely invades our human life — it is the hour when we see our human life in its infinite dimensions, the hour when we know the invisible humanity of God.

Too often men have supposed that the point of contact between humanity and God is reached by the throwing out of many, magnificent phrases, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and the like, when all along the human spirit has stood ready and eager to believe in these immense realities of God if only they could be realized in our poor, human life. Just *how* is the infinite power, the infinite wisdom, the infinite presence of God to move within the narrow con-

fines of our finite humanity? Do not the very terms of our deification of God estrange him from the trials and errors and sorrows of our human lives?

In these quivering questions of poor humanity I always seem to hear the sad voice of a human soul crying out for the living God. "Oh, that I could find God; the living God! I am weary of men's faint descriptions of God. I want God, a patient and hopeful God, a Man-God, whose infinite being is all alive with the hopes and passions of our human life, whose power and presence are engaged with men in the way of righteousness and love, whose infinite being is daily, hourly putting on the garments of Humanity."

I talked the other day with a noble man who is spending the strong years of his life working in city missions. He is trying to redeem human life at just those points where the divine life is threatened by apparently incurable diseases of sin. He told me of a man whom he had seen arise and fall again and again in a frightful struggle with a degrading appetite of the soul that was assailing him. And my friend said to me "I tell you, as I watched the man, and saw the divine fire appear and then fade away, then reappear and again fade away, each reappearance of the spirit finding him a little nearer the infinite light of God, as I watched the awful struggle and determination of the spirit of God in this fighting,

human soul — I tell you I could have worshipped the man, I could have fallen on my knees and worshipped."

Well, don't you see it *was* God in the Man? If ever there is a God, it is the God who has dedicated his whole eternal life to this struggle of humanity to become divine. The hour in which your human life takes on divinity, the hour in which once for all eternity you resolve in your inmost soul to live always in the presence of an infinite being of holiness and love, the hour in which your human life becomes triumphantly divine is just the hour in which the divine life becomes triumphantly human.

III

And genuinely to believe in this invisible humanity of God brings into the human life a wonderful sense of perfect communion with God. Do you find the conditions of life hard? They are infinitely harder for God, my friend. Is your spirit clogged by the mass of duties which you wearily face with the dawn of each new day? Ah, think of the world-weariness of God, and be still! Is a man's soul marred by some vice of his inner life? What pollutes man pollutes God. I am looking always for that prophet of the spirit of God who shall burn this world-old truth into the souls of men: God is in very deed bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, spirit of their

spirit; God is in truth closer to our human life than breathing, nearer than hands and feet; all the plague-spots in human life, all the houses of sin, all the hours of solitary unfaithfulness and dishonor, are places and times where the precious spirit of God is being debased and ruined for that which is not holy and righteous. Oh! the spirit of man must hide itself in shame, must cry out in heart-broken penitence when once it knows the humiliation and suffering its faithlessness has brought into the sensitive spirit of God.

Does the glory of man lie in triumphing over these lowering conditions of life? So is it with God. You need not suppose that the perfection of God is for him an eternal, unworked-for beauty of soul. He who thinks he sees in God this placid, unmoved and solitary perfection has placed a poor, human soul in the high place of God — a human soul whose face is unmarred by life's imperfections, only because it has always been protected from the winds that blow and the storms that wreck. But the spirit of God has faced the storms and winds of an eternity and is still triumphing over a whole world of sins and pains and sorrows. Who then sees the perfection of God sees in infinite number and in infinite directions the lines of *Character*, the invisible marks of a divine Humanity, whose nobility, whose perfection consists in the simple yet unthinkable sinlessness of the divine being: a di-

vine life all full of our human impulses and passions, yet never once in all eternity yielding the divine ideal to that which is base and mean.

## IV

Of this invisible humanity of God there is no visible sign or symbol. Men who ignobly turn from the simple, daily duties and cares of life and cry "Lord, show us a sign," "Lord, Lord what shall we do to be saved" are not ready for the beatific vision. There is no luxury in this experience of God. In this vision there is the peace that passeth understanding but there is in it no ravishing luxury of spirit. The vision is for him who gladly accepts its blessed challenges. It is for him who finds joy only in the way of righteousness, whose spirit leaps out with a great joy into an eternity of life and duty; for him who knows not what the everlasting years may bring of joy or of sorrow into his eternal spirit but who will not doubt that his is God's way, his life God's life, his endless humanity the ever patient and hopeful divinity of God. It is for the man who can find in the ever human and understanding spirit of God the power to recover from some staggering blow of life, the will to feel the tender, wholesome spirit of divine life struggling and conquering day by day in the life of humanity. The vision is for him who for God's sake sees every living creature transfigured in this light of the ages, who sees God fighting in

the very face of human idiocy and sin, who is able to see in the desolate ruins of human institutions and of human lives something of the infinite sorrow of God, something of the marred and defeated spirit of the Father of mankind.

And yet, who save God himself may cry "Defeated!" Is it not just the mystery of this divine life that it breathes forth an invisible and infallible faith in our human lives, that in the very moment when human priests have sadly condemned a child of God to eternal death, the greater, wiser, patienter spirit of God is there endlessly confident, infinitely faithful, pronouncing its everlasting "no;" reviving the fainting spirit; crooning over the sin-sodden human soul; soothing it to sleep, it may be — but to a sleep which shall not end in death; a sleep, rather, from which the human spirit shall awaken refreshed and re-strengthened to re-enter the life of the world and the life of God? Once more, the mystery of God's invisible humanity, the unseen reality of a divine life which is genuinely, understandingly all that our human life from day to day is seeking and hoping to be, a divine life in which weariness, impatience and hopelessness are ever present, seeking to defeat the infinitudes surrounding our human life, and yet a spirit of God which, if weary never rests, if impatient never strikes, if hopeless never dies.

# VII

# THE PRESENT GOD

As the theme of our evening's meditation, I have chosen to consider with you the romance of God's invisible humanity, the motion of his unseen spirit on-pressing in the souls of men. This experience of God can be measured only by the instrument of meditation: *Silence* must underly and master the words with which we shall seek to sound this invisible humanity I call God. The persistent presence of divinity in the race of men! From the first man with his vision of his own invisibly divine image in burning bush and flaming star to the last man with his grasp of God's human spirit regnant and watchful over the star-strewn heavens and the men-strewn earth —how consciously, patiently, triumphantly has God's spirit pressed in upon the opening souls of men! *God is.* The invisible spirit of all humanity, God is! I know not what may be in the infinite reaches of unvisited space and untranspired time. I only know that by some commanding passion of his expanseless being, by some tender impulse of his placeless soul a God-Man has come to earth to dwell within men. He has come to dwell evermore in the lives of men, making his own their trials and errors, their successes

and joys, their goodness and loving kindness. There is some strange, imperative persuasiveness in this faith that men of all times and climes have kept in the living presence of God's image in their souls. It is a direct perception of faith which only a suicidal scepticism has ever defeated. As men's sense of the brutal energy round about them has grown, their spirits have but gained just so much in trustful confidence: this majestic God of the heavens by the *virtue* of his very power is all the more reliably concerned for their life, all the more joyful in the times of their gladness, the more sad in the hours of their sorrow, the more tenderly forgiving in the places of their sin, the more patient in the days of their weakness and unfaithfulness.

II

What matters it then that the earliest concern of the divine life was with the blind organizing of the great universe round about men? I dare say the human passions and purposes of the universal Life lay for countless ages concealed and dormant within creation's soul. But *now!* Who can contemplate the drama of the divine life in the enlarging souls of men and yet miss the vision of a creative Life all revealed and all a-quiver with human power? Why, the faith of men alone in their own eternal value, their vision of themselves under the form of an endless divinity must have drawn a response from the all-

feeling spirit: the universal Life cannot have missed these throbs of divinity outpouring from the newborn souls of men. How hardly could the great drama of divine faith have enacted itself in this world-home of men, had not the impulses of men's righteousness and love become at once the deepest concern in the heart and being of God himself! Every act of human righteousness, each impulse of human tenderness and affection in the world-homes of men are intimations of an unspeakable harmony aimed at hour by hour, world by world, in the heart and being of the universal life of humanity, the God of mankind. Human temptations, trials, sins are but signs of a passionate Life eternally present yet everlastingly mastered in the divine being, the invisible Father-spirit of men.

What if it were not even so? Suppose this drama of the divine in human life were, as some of the positivists would have us believe, enacting itself on a human stage alone; that this on-pushing human life were all there is of divinity in the world-life? Would not this divinity triumph none the less? Would it not grow silently, and magically extend its sobering, transforming passion of divine life to all men in all generations? Would not men under the pressure of the divinity within acquit themselves as responsible and infallible gods? Nay, would not this perfect passion of us human gods transpierce, chasten and soften the very energies of the heavens? The

complaint of the positivist is that men have relied too much upon the God of their magic and superstition. Meanwhile the pathetic fallacy of positivism is that in its turn it relies too little upon the Man of its humanitarian vision. In *him* is the very quintessence of divine energy and passion. His belief in the regnancy over all things of righteousness and love is inviolable. No creature is so frail or debased, and no creature so monstrous as not to respond to the touch of unaffected goodness, faithfulness and purity in the world. A single pin-point of divinity, a solitary impulse of natural love in any place or time of the world's being must infallibly master with its divine control all the awful and terrifying powers of the universal life, bringing all heavens and all men within the light and strength of its constant life.

Just so, I believe, the divine life has kept pace with the life within our human souls, inviting, guiding and furthering all our essays in divinity. Of every enlargement of the spirits of men, of every deepening experience in which the race of men has come into a profounder sense of God's presence and into a surer and more intimate communion with his world-old Life — we may rest assured that the great spirit of God deep down in the souls of men and far out on the horizon of the world's vast being, the great heart of God has known; his invisible spirit has felt and has poured in its answering life and love. Ah, this

unseen, incomparable humanity of God! How silently and patiently it throbs out its life in this world-home of men. That is God alive! — the God who has lived and grown in all humanity, the God who lives and grows in you and in me this night and eternally, the great Companion of our hours of world-loneliness, the great Physician of our nights of soul-sickness, the great God of our souls.

When will men cease measuring God in cubits? When will we cease esteeming the divine life by the sheer heights and abysses of the world's being? When will men cease worshipping "His Majesty"? When shall we escape this last form of idolatry, this worshipping of a telescopic image of the unknown God? *Then*, shall we awaken and arise to the true height and tenderness of God's invisible being!

III

There is only one tragedy in life from which the human soul seems unable to recover, only one derangement of life's natural harmony so fearsome that the broken spirit deliberates longingly upon death eternal. It is the frightful loneliness of the soul that has lost faith in the companioning love of the divine life and sees only blindness and cruelty in the heart of the surrounding world-life. Facing this fearful vision of an untrustworthy universal Life that sets it about, the human soul finds the very majesty that

once commanded its confidence an instrument of torment: calamity impends; one blow, and this human life is staggering under an intolerable weight of sorrow and soul-death.

One night my path crossed that of a lonely woman of the world. I learned that on that very night she harboured in her soul a longing to express her life in a way of sin. Her life cried out against this desecration of her childhood's innocency and sweet chastity. Yet she would offer all upon the altar of her generous human love. As one whose life is defeated save for its poor, human pulse-beats she told me that her soul would no longer pray. She believed in God; yes, and trembled. The Great Father was dead and her own soul had burned itself on his pyre until death. There seemed to her henceforth more of companionship and tenderness in the life of sinful affection she contemplated than in the whole being of him she called God, the distant Creator of her ancestral traditions. As I turned silently and solemnly away leaving her there in the night, a solitary figure, type of all the lonely, wandering souls in this great world, I knew she was beyond my human help, lost to the arguments of *men*. I knew that only the infinitely human, patient and hopeful spirit of God could ever recall her soul to his great world-home.

Some years later I crossed the path of another spirit driven to the verge of madness by this

same loss of faith in the humane presence of God. She was alone and friendless in the world. In her loneliness of spirit she sought the companionship of God but could not find him. A woman of refinement with no impulses to temporary sin she was able by her culture to find in God all the qualities of divinity save just this one note of infinite humanity. Power, majesty, law, righteousness — all these she acknowledged as belonging in the world being; but in all these she found no response to her trembling, human needs, no real presence to companion her in the lonely struggles of her wakeful night-watches. For long she had been desperately struggling against the impulse to give up her search for the divine companionship and to end her life in a last, violent protest against the lovelessness of the circumpressing power she called God.

The exquisite pain of utter soul-loneliness, when all forms, human and divine, appear as they were phantasmal and unreal! What wonder that the broken soul seeks relief in the painlessness of endless death? It is the tragedy of a soul that has lost for a while humanity's age-long vision of God's own mystic humanity. Is it strange that the tearing away from a human spirit of the silent soul of its humanity, the painfully accumulated belief of all human ages in God's surpassing humanity, should so lacerate and maim that soul that in death it seeks release from the horrible aching at its broken heart? It is as if

the very soul of humanity had met a sudden and tragic death, as if the whole soul of God had passed out of this world-home of our human life.

## IV

But there is in all this a divine compensation. The loss of faith in God's regnant humanity may torture a soul beyond all human endurance. And yet passing thus through this valley of soul-death the human spirit, sooner or later, now or then, will emerge into the sunlight of God's invisible presence — a presence solemnized and brightened in infinite degree by the vision of the soul's black death. Just so, this faith in God's full humanity may in the very hour of deadly darkness enter the life of a man and burn in upon him a mark of divinity so tender and sensitive that no calamity, whether of death or of life, can estrange him from God's endless humanities. His soul has been touched with a live fire from the altar of God's eternal humanity.

All other ways to God are blind, formal, unconceiving except this way of mystic, practical confidence in the spaceless, timeless value of human life. God may by external marks reveal the whole body of his divinity and yet his invisibly human soul remain unseen. It is this unseen grace of infinite patience, hopefulness and human understanding, transforming all God's visible, physical energies, that sets him at once beyond the range of our physical imagination

and yet within the range of our divinely human needs. The divine energy of God's invisible humanity pours through and beyond us as we come and go upon our human errands of mercy and pity. The divine sorrow, deep yet comprehending beyond the limits of our poor human vision presses in upon our human souls until round about is the perfect peacefulness of the divine companionship. This infinite humanity of God is not to be proved or measured. His divine humanity must be touched directly, heart to heart, spirit to spirit. We must let our human life with its faltering courage, nobility and love be filled straightway and abundantly from the divine life with its world-wide courage, its world-old nobility and love.

By no other way can a man arrive at a conviction of God which might not at the very next turn in his human life be shaken by one of life's mysterious calamities. A thousand cases of real life are at hand in every plague-spotted city in the world to show you that your dainty demonstration of God blinks the facts. God alive appears only to him whose search begins and ends in a pure and brave humanity. Let the purity and heroism disappear from a man's belief in God and he will find himself stolidly worshipping the wooden deity of a schoolman. As there is only one kind of godlessness, so there is only one kind of godliness. The godless man is he who, knowing God by all the clever tricks of the

schoolman's trade, no longer keeps faith with the righteous humanity of God. The godly man is he who without the conceit of knowledge yet has kept faith with men, has played the divine game of the humanities honorably, tirelessly, unwhimperingly, and who gladly risks his eternal life upon the belief that righteousness and love are at the heart of things in this world. For insensibly this man with his boundless human vision comes to practice God's invisible humanity, and in practicing this human divinity he learns that the infinite energy of a schoolman's demonstrated God is one in substance and in spirit with the divine energy that preoccupies all men's meditations and leads them in the way of humanity.

## V

Even so the race of men has learned to risk its unseen future upon the belief that its age-long vision of an ideal humanity is but the vision of the deepest, intensest and noblest passions in the very soul of God. I sometimes glimpse this vision of humanity's God alive as it appears in the midst of the grey cloud of magic and superstition obscuring its gracious features. It is a vision of a Man of almightiness and deep wisdom, a Man with soul-sinews like brass and iron, his form and features all marred and scarred by the battles of life, his person all quivering and sensitive with the pain and suffering and sorrows of life. A nobleman he is with power and wisdom

checked and controlled in a perfect, constant patience and love. In his everlasting arms he bears and protects a little child. His great strength is held and guarded lest by some accident of his very power he should injure and crush this precious offspring of his love. His great wisdom is bowed down to the level of the simple prattle of the child-life he is bearing, his great body a-tremble with the joy of the responsive caresses with which the child expresses its perfect trust in his great being, its perfect dependence upon his great heart. With infinite gentleness and tender firmness he controls and guides the little soul struggling and throbbing in his restraining, encircling arms. And as this vision of the divine Man grows clearer and clearer in the long course of human history, as his features becoming more and more majestic and world-wide finally disappear in the invisible depths of time and space I know that this divine **Man is God. And** the little child **is Humanity.**

# APPENDIX A

# AN OUTLINE OF COSMIC HUMANISM[1]

In a former paper in this Journal the writer outlined an hypothesis of absolute experience, suggesting here and there a philosophy of "cosmic humanism" which, if worked out, might redeem American philosophy from its present level of brute pragmatism and unromantic realism. If only the master pragmatists would suppress their endless essays in defense and definition of their method! All but the most stiff-necked and unregenerate of the younger English-writing philosophers have long ago adopted the pragmatic method, but now stand amazed and dismayed to find their masters indulging themselves in the sin of elaboration and analysis. This abuse of the "method of definition" is the natural vice of rationalism. It were better that the pragmatists applied their energies to cultivating the world-ground which they have already wrested from their hereditary foes.

The world-ground lies fallow, awaiting the hand and will of an expert. Meanwhile it may be well to offer, as a stimulant and irritant, an out-

[1] The present paper was read before the American Philosophical Association at its meeting in Baltimore, December 29–31, 1908, and is reprinted from the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VI, No. 3.

line of the world-view which in his former paper the writer described as "cosmic humanism."

I

The pragmatist has on his hands a world-ground. What shall he make out of it? There is a certain pusillanimity in the present attitude of pragmatism. The Promethean boldness of rationalism's world-views may well have staggered the gods. But now their divine amazement is tempered with heavenly mirth by the spectacle of a *will*-philosophy which yet does not dare to press beyond the limits of tedious definition and timid, "on-the-whole" hypotheses. The history of earlier pragmatisms with their *homo mensura* sophisims makes it certain that unless pragmatism produces a man who shall measure the very cosmos by himself, the movement begun so potently and promisingly a few years ago will prove as evanescent as a passing breeze. The pragmatist theory has never yet been genuinely tested. Such a test would require that the, so far, rather sterile pragmatic philosophy were incubated for a while in the self-same cosmic matrix wherein the seeds of rationalism have hitherto germinated and flourished. What sort of world-view is the pragmatic passion likely to breed if it thus germinates and produces its kind on a cosmic scale?

Its offspring must be in some sense a *world*-view. In this matter the pragmatist must recognize the validity and persistency of the human

spirit's search for something universal and eternal. Such a search has indubitably had its functional value in the growing experience of the race, and must, therefore, by the pragmatic test be recognized as helping to constitute the living truth. What, then, is this perfect passion for universals and eternals? Has it the validity of a world-forming, world-creating principle? Is it *merely* a passion? Perhaps the passion itself is the one universal thing in the world? Does it connect, or disconnect, the human from the cosmic? Is it the whimpering and wailing of a soul in an incurable agony of finiteness? Or is it the terrific will-force of an *Ubermensch* claiming his birthright as an aristocrat of the universal life? It may well be that a painstaking critique of this old-fashioned passion for the eternal and universal will expose impulses out of which pragmatism itself may organize a view of the world covering in principle the whole ground of reality.

It is certain that, whatever the eternal is, it is not of the nature of *ideas*. The prime fallacy of rationalism arises from its failure to distinguish between the *function* and the *content* of an eternal impulse. The region in which the self acknowledges a universal *a priori* quality in its processes is, as the literature of speculative mysticism attests, a region of transempirical consciousness. Wherever the mystic experience has divulged a content of ideas, these can be shown to be preconceptions subconsciously stored away in

the mystic's past experience. The pure function of consciousness in this transempirical region has the imperative, eternal, universal quality just because it has no empirical content. It is a pure function; its uncertain content, the irreducible contradiction between ideas and will, has always been regarded by the first-class pessimist as an unmitigated evil.

It can not be affirmed that this pure function is inwardly diversified into fourteen forms of experience, more or less. Here, again, the evidence of speculative mysticism must be trusted. The persistent characteristic of the pure mystic experience is its spacelessness, timelessness, causelessness. For some years the writer has experimented in this mystic region, but has been unable to identify in the experience, *e. g.*, of time, as infinite, any quality that distinguishes it from space, as infinite. The experience in both cases is one of perfect *fluency* without ideational content. The infinite as well as the infinitesimal space-experience begins to "swim" or "shiver" as consciousness verges upon the abysmal. These are the habitual expressions by which my subjects have sought to symbolize the perfect fluency of the universal and eternal quality in the experience of space and time.

And this which is true of the infinitudes of the pure reason is equally true of the infinitudes of the practical. Who can uncover say, in wisdom, as infinite, a quality that isolates it from

goodness, as infinite? In the wisdom literature from Plato to Emerson these terms of practical infinitude are constantly interchanged and interfused. The eternal goodness is in all points wise: the universal wisdom is in all directions good. In the mystic experience neither goodness nor wisdom has any ideational content.

The first principle of cosmic humanism confronts us here. Whatever may be in detail the defects of the world-view herein outlined, this first principle I hold to be indefeasible: "infinite" when attached to any substantive whatsoever is the sign of a contentless, formless *function* of experience. A self-organism, whether human or cosmic, in fundamentally finite on the side of its empirical content. There is no such *thing* in man or cosmos as an infinite *idea*.

The writer's former thesis in cosmic humanism is, therefore, not guilty of begging the question between pragmatism and rationalism in affirming that there must be even in a world-experience a region of absolute subconsciousness the infinity of which is purely functional. We may grant, with philosophers like Leibnitz and Hartmann, the hypothesis of an unending, unconscious fecundity in the world-ground. The cosmic life may be in an incomparable degree teeming with germinating ideas and wills. We are driven, nevertheless, by the most fundamental structure of our own organisms of experience to presuppose a formless function underlying all these countless half-con-

scious impulses, ideas, and passions of the world-ground.

In its first principle cosmic humanism is thus aligned with speculative mysticism rather than with rationalism. It acknowledges in the world-ground an " infinite tendency " rather than a well-ordered and self-representative structure of eternal and universal ideas.

II

In its second principle this cosmic application of the pragmatic method must transfer to the world-ground another ingrained feature of the human organism of experience; namely, the instinctive coördination of blind impulses into a consistent organism of vital experience. The pure function of consciousness does, in fact, take on a living content; the unconscious does become conscious; the simple fluency of primal consciousness does become dirempted by warring wills and ideas. The prenatal bareness of animal experience does fructify with the passing years. The cosmic function has evolved a cosmos with the passing ages. Now, is this a fructification into consciousness of unconscious *idea* or of unconscious *will?*

Here, again, the bias of rationalism must yield under the test of experience. This test has already shown us that the inmost structure of consciousness excludes the notion of a divine mind full of an infinite number of infinite ideas and

forms. But rationalism might justly intervene at this point with the sentimental contention with which throughout its history it has gripped the race of men. Putting aside all metaphysical claims with respect to the ideas of the eternal and universal, this pure sentiment of rationality simply claims that at any rate the motives of the cosmic life are always ideational rather than impulsive, calm rather than passionate. The sole aim of world-experience is to arrive at an eventual, inner harmony of its germinating ideas, to subject all wills to this ideal of consistency and smoothness of being. In a word, the prime aim of experience is to become *reasonable*.

If this final defense of rationalism is an argument for the *primacy* of ideas as against impulses, its argument can not claim the support of experience. On the contrary, nothing is more certain than the primacy of the impulsive phase of consciousness. The consciousness of single-celled animals is fundamentally motor; likewise the prenatal consciousness of the higher animals. In these two cases no idea whatever (except, perhaps, sensations of pressure and warmth) can be present in the organism's inner experience; and yet the very signs are motor by which the psychologists infer that they are conscious at all. Or, again, in idiocy and senile dementia, where consciousness approaches once more its primal state, the last functions that linger above the threshold are not ideational, but motor. In "absolute" idiocy

there still remains a vegetating activity; in dementia the first functions to disappear or become confused are ideational, and in the last stages an impulsive activity continues long after it becomes only too painfully apparent that all control from ideational centers has ceased.

With scrupulous regard for the structure of known organisms of experience, cosmic humanism is thus able to take a second step in its construction of world-experience. It now conceives that experience to be an infinite, totally subconscious function whose first steps in world-experience are impulsive rather than ideational. No matter how persistently a world-soul may in its present constitution be aiming at inward reasonableness, in its beginning it had no *idea* where or how its activity was coming out. Like every other organism of experience, it just became, it just grew! In this matter cosmic experience is again comparable with the mystic passion which desires an infinite number of things, and yet has no *idea* what these things are. *The cosmic passion may be eternal, the cosmic idea is inherently temporal.*

III

These initial impulses arising blindly within the formless and fluent infinity of world-consciousness have undergone coördinating, organizing, and hardening processes. In the present state of the cosmos the average observer will be very reluctant to accept any doctrine of the pres-

ent plasticity of cosmic stuff. In this matter of plasticity the materialist now has the weight of evidence in his pan of the scales. The patent fact is that, except within very narrow limits indeed, things are not plastic under our processes of practical reaction. By overdoing its hypothesis of the perfect plasticity of the world-ground, humanism might easily fall into the pathetic fallacy of absolute idealism. On the clear ground of known experience the humanist may insist (*a*) that the cosmos conceived as world-experience must be inwardly a pure function, and (*b*) that in its *initial* processes of growth it was an inchoate matrix of perfectly plastic yet blind impulses-to-be. But it can not be urged on the same ground that world-experience in its present state is thus blindly and perfectly fluent. World-impulses, whatever they may be in their inward, primeval character, are now outwardly fixed and hardened.

Does, then, the structure of cosmic humanism fall to pieces because one can not by taking thought pinch off a cubit of world-stuff and plaster it on his own head, nor by praying make the sun stop in its course? There is a certain merit in the criticism of one of pragmatism's doughty opponents who declares that the theory is designed solely for the man who needs to get out of a scrape. But the apparent bathos of pragmatism at this point arises solely from a failure to fit the structure of human experience *fully* into

the cosmic scheme. For it is true of human experience, not only that it has this inner and initial plasticity, but also that in its adult form it has stiffened and hardened into all sorts of physical fixtures. In our own organisms there exist innumerable physical processes which are only subconsciously felt and are ordinarily wholly uncontrolled from higher centers. In both its phylogenetic and ontogenetic origin this human experience began, we may fairly suppose, as a plastic feeling-consciousness of the total organism: the plastic simplicity of the consciousness of the single-celled animal and of the freshly impregnated fetus is paralleled in each case by the plasticity and simplicity of the organism itself. But with the inward formation of physical systems each discharging a fixed function in the evolving organism there proceeded likewise on the side of consciousness a certain subconscious hardening of physical consciousness; *e. g.*, feelings of visceral massiveness, of joint and muscle strains, of physical weight, hardness, and the like.

Humanism, disabused of any metaphysical hypothesis of cosmic plasticity, should propose at this point an hypothesis of cosmic, physical subconsciousness. In brief, two postulates are involved in the fundamental structure of physical experience. (I) The physical universe has originated not by the fully conscious control of some eternal intelligence but, rather, through a hardening into objective being of the unconscious,

organic needs of the impulsively evolving cosmos. (2) The physical universe is now felt in the cosmic life as so much pull and strain and dead weight.[1] In a word, plasticity is no more a characteristic of cosmic than of human experience.

## IV

On the other hand, the humanist metaphysic need not postulate a cosmic experience *less* plastic than the human. As we have just seen, the physical parts of an organism are *felt*. They are not inwardly and radically sundered from the region of conscious being; they are subconscious, but not unconscious. Moreover, within certain limits physical processes are subject to control from the higher motor centers of the organism. Consciously controlled heart-beating, accelerated or depressed circulation of the blood, voluntary bisecting of the viscera, the suggestive therapeutic reduction of inflammation in diseased parts, the psychic treatment of nervous and chronic diseases — these are cases in point. The evidence by no means proves the complete plasticity of the human organism under conscious control from higher centers; it does indicate, however, that there is in

[1] I need hardly say that this transcription of physical subconsciousness from the human to the cosmic scale should not be carried to an anthropomorphic extreme. In the cosmic life there are, of course, no visceral feelings, no muscle and joint strains, and all that. At the most the cosmic physique feels in a universal degree the intracortical strains and the brain fatigue which assail the human life.

the conscious organism no inherent *inability* which would prevent the controlling of physical processes from volitional centers of the cosmic life.

## V

The foregoing conclusions expose the marrow of the divinity within the dry bones of scholasticism. The genius of the schoolman is revealed and exhausted by his search for a necessarily permanent principle underlying and pervading the shifting sands of being. And this is the lasting passion of all seekers after the universal and eternal.

That such a principle is discoverable we have seen. It is in reality not a system of fixed and well-ordered concepts, but a pressure of conscious activity presupposed in all our processes of experience and felt even in the region of our subconscious, organic life. But the very process of analysis which discovers this active principle of all experience does not wholly satisfy the scholastic passion for an eternal whose existence is *necessary. It is conceivable that the function* of *consciousness even on a cosmic scale should cease to be active.* There are cases of known organisms wherein the active, organizing principle has practically ceased to work. In absolute idiocy and coma the organism of experience seems to be slipping back into the abyss of totally unconscious non-being. Either because of a congenital poverty of impulses-to-be, or through a fatiguing

of these impulses, conscious activity seems about played out. If, now, we apply the norm of human to cosmic experience, we may admit the possibility of defectiveness and fatigue even in the cosmic organism. The persistency of the physical universe in the midst of its ceaseless flux of being must thus be interpreted partly as the natural healthiness of a great cosmic animal [1] and partly as the conscious resistance of cosmic energy to the deranging forces of mental disease.[2] The real existence of universal principles or laws is, therefore, to be regarded not as necessary, but rather as the achievement of a partly conscious and partly subconscious will-to-be in the cosmic life.

## VI

It remains only to ward off a possible misunderstanding of the foregoing analysis of the world's absolutely subconscious matrix by explaining that this discussion of the "infinite" has no explicit reference to the *tender* infinitudes of religious experience. To affirm that the absolutely subconscious has in itself a *blind* character

[1] A large part of the living truth is undoubtedly expressed in the cosmic *animism* of Greek culture. See Plato's description of the world-soul as a "perfect animal," "Timæus," 31. *Cf.* Aristotle: "Deity is an animal that is everlasting and most excellent in nature. . . . This constitutes the very essence of God," "Metaphysics," Book XI., 6.

[2] Such resistance appears to fail, as we have seen, on the human plane in cases of idiocy and senile dementia and on the stellar plane in cases of "dying" comets.

which, as blind and unconscious, is strictly sub-moral, or to consider that this subconscious world-life has arrived at and is now consciously working out in its voluntary centers a *personal character*, or to submit the ground on which religious experience may justify its antagonism to positivism in claiming that this personal character is cosmic and not merely human — these questions the writer hopes to discuss at some future time in a paper dealing with "The Cosmic Character."

# APPENDIX B

# THE COSMIC CHARACTER [1]

In two earlier articles in this Journal the writer worked to grub out the roots of the pragmatic tree of knowledge. The tap-root he found to be a bare function, an universal activity, in its *primal* nature subpersonal and subconscious. In this paper I presume to deal with the apparent disparity between this God, as blind, subvegetable, metaphysical first cause, and the cosmic character, the God alive, upon which religious experience seems to depend.

## I

First of all we must disabuse our minds of the notion that the cosmic character is *substantial*. The function in which life, whether human or cosmic, has its primal cause is practically universal and eternal; but only *practically*. The function is so long as life is; conscious activity (*sum cogitans*) is indubitable so long as the living doubt continues, but no longer. It is theoretically conceivable that all life, cosmic as well as human, should cease to be. In this catastrophic event the allegedly everlasting water-springs would have run dry, the tap-root of being would wither and

[1] Reprinted from the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. VI., No. 12.

dry up into nothing, the world-soul would flicker out in black death.

But there is in all this no occasion for pausing. Tested pragmatically, death and nothing are unthinkable concepts. Reflection upon them could not further, but only retard life. Their sole reality consists in their devilish power to defeat at every point the lust of rationalism, the senseless passion for *absolute* certainty. Meanwhile I find no thinkable connection between this absolute certainty and that *practical* certainty upon which active life depends.

The cosmic function is indeed *conceivably* perishable. But its decadence into death and nothing is *practically* unthinkable. Just because the cosmic life would in such an event flicker out into nothing, no one could possibly prepare his person for such a catastrophic end. The very last assumption with which our practical reason can get on is that of a functional activity which, as active, is practically absolute and imperishable; and this no matter what disease, human or cometary, may assault its universal life. Let one be purely humanitarian in his humanism after the manner of the positivists. Even so, he must assume that energy in one form or another of human activity is unassailable. This is the live nub of the schoolman's insistence upon an eternal as *existent*. There simply *must* be an ἄπειρον, he thinks — a That in its root impractical, but in its potenti-

alities inexhaustible and practically absolute.[1]

There has got to be an universal energy on which the phenomenal life of God and of men may draw endlessly. Of course men and God may not have this limitless credit in the great vault beyond. There is a certain speculative risk in all life, for that is the condition of life. Our lives, human and cosmic, depend upon taking the cash here and now and letting the credit go on so long as it will. It could only be after God and we were eternally dead and nothing, that the default of universal energy could reduce us to destitution and starvation; i. e., never so long as we know ourselves.

In action the universal energy does function radically. It sloughs off dead parts from the cosmic organism and renews its withered members. The cosmic environment here and now is all on the side of health and perpetuity for those who are fit. And this is the first datum of the cosmic character: its inherent ability to preserve itself alive, its practical assumption that the energy within and without is everlastingly real and subject to all the drafts which can possibly be made upon it in the interest of life.

1 Poincaré says some clever things of this "something" as it stands in theoretical physics. See his "Science and Hypothesis," *e. g.*, p. 166.

## II

The implication of this first datum is that the cosmic character is an *achievement*. The universal energy must be drawn *upon*. In itself it is in the last degree impersonal, impractical, indifferent. The etymologists confirm this in their account of the verb of being. "To be" in its root-meaning is "to stand forth." The world-energy, I dare say, genuinely *is* only when it stands forth. The root-meaning of life is exclamatory, assertive, the will-to-power. I am: that I am.

Too often cosmic life has been conceived as an energy which must *needs* function in the form of a phenomenal, universal life: its standing forth is a necessary function of its eternal being. The Eternal thus unconsciously and without effort creates and maintains the best possible world: the world-soul does not actively draw upon, but is poured in upon, *by* the universal energy. But this postulate of willynilly creative energy goes against the grain of human experience. The fact is that the pouring-in process implies a certain suction on the part of the living organism. The receiving of power from on high or from within implies a will-to-power. The first-class pessimists are wanting in this will; for them there is agony in the growing-pains of life's processes. They accordingly refuse to suckle themselves at the breast of being. They would sink back into the

tireless, senseless That they set out from. It is not inherently impossible that one should in the end utterly dam the inlets of the universal energy.

We must remark in this a second datum of the cosmic character. The will-to-power implies a will-to-impotence. This ingrained feature of the human organism must be transcribed into the cosmic life as well. There is an energy circumpressing both within and without. Upon this the cosmic life draws at all times and places of its eventual life. The drawing-in process is not necessary, but optional. Merely to be, to stand forth, is in itself an unconscious symptom of health and character. For the universal life, like the human in its morbid moods, may genuinely prefer dissolution to further organization, death to life. The world-organism is thus an achievement. The tirelessness, persistency, and continuity of its being are symptomatic of a certain sanity, a congenital, temperamental healthy-mindedness in the living soul of things.

There are cases, individual and racial, of apparently incurable insanity: the inlets of the universal life with its unconscious sanity seem hopelessly dammed up. Such evil is radical. Its cure, I imagine, can only be effected, if by any means, by a painful, conscious operation within the universal life itself. Certainly in its case the unconscious remedial agency of the cosmic life has miserably failed. But in any event the existence here and there of diseased parts in the world-

organism does not argue that the whole is incompetent or likely to degenerate into the amorphous energy, the cosmic infancy, it set out from. The evidence weighs heavily on the side of the general *sanity* of the cosmic life.

A third datum of the cosmic character therefore, is its animal efficiency and unconscious sanity. It achieves being, it draws upon the universal energy by a natural instinct-to-be.

III

In these prime data, however, the cosmic character is subconscious and subpersonal. So far, the cosmic life is strictly animal; it grows instinctively in the virgin womb of being. The human life is suckled, fortified and sanified within this cosmic animal.[1]

This, too, is religion of a certain type and its proper emotions are in a profound degree theophanic. Meanwhile it is arch-pessimism — a religion based upon the experience of personal life as a disease of consciousness to be remedied by anesthesis and analgesis, a return to the subconscious organism of which personal feeling-will is but an inflamed member. Cosmic character, so the argument goes, is only weakened and diseased by these germs of personality.

1 One feels secure and willing to function naturally within cosmos's great organism. But I wonder if our cosmic emotion at this level is not really comparable with the gratitude we might feel toward a great animal that has instinctively saved our own skin and bones from the grave?

The writer agrees that a *person* is an inflammation of cosmic being. But this disease of personality is a condition in which alone such terms as "purpose," "value," "worth," "morality," gain genuine meaning. Religious pessimism has always aimed at so-called *unconscious* purpose, *instinctive* worth, *animal* morality. But really these are all contradictions in terms. They would reduce ends to unconscious, instinctive, animal functions, whereas the quintessential meaning of an end requires that it be consciously felt, aimed at, controlled; in a word, that it prepossess and be consciously acknowledged by some person. I grant that this condition is hard. Each fulfillment wherein a conscious purpose becomes a part of the organism's unconscious character is but the progenitor of another newly-felt purpose; and so on endlessly. But this constitutes *conscious* as distinguished from *unconscious* character. In personality there is an indispensable endless challenge to unfulfilled being, a "standing forth" which, on the one hand, will not permit the human life to sink back into the unconscious bliss of animal activity it has risen above, and which, on the other hand, can never raise that human life to a haven of supraconscious rest. Fichte found this inner *anstoss* a challenge for all time. Carlyle leapt under it as under a cosmic lash. Poor Nietzsche lost his sanity under the pressure of its ceaseless will-to-power.

At all events the cosmic life has in *us* taken on

a conspicuous personal character. In us its present ends are genuinely felt. In us its ends are unthinkable, endless, as the pessimists are everlastingly reminding us; but they are none-the-less conscious imperatives. We may risk disease, lose the sanity of our pure reason in gaining the sanity of our practical, but if we turn back we are as salt which has lost its savor: we lose the very flavor and essence of character. In us, then, the blind character of the cosmic impulses has become endlessly conscious. Henceforth we must *aim* at being, we must control our ends even to the point where the abysmal possibilities of being blind us with a new kind of blindness; the blindness of one whose pupils strain to take in the invisible.

"But this is positivism, pure and simple," some one will say. "This is human character, very good while it lasts! but it makes out no such case for the *universal* life. It means merely that a certain animal has evolved into conscious self-possession. Man, so far, *sports* above his cosmic progenitor. Like positivism, your cosmic humanism is really an *ungodding* (*Entgöttung*) of the universal life, a surreptitious deification of human being. Is God, then, merely a 'crowd-consciousnes'?"

To all this cosmic humanism must reply imperturbably: God, if not *merely* human, is at any rate *essentially* just that. Our humanism has practically all its active interests in common with

scientific positivism.[1] In its description of the universal life there is no taint of magic religion nor of overleaping metaphysics. The world-ground as the incomparably fecund matrix of the present cosmos is in our view identical with the ether-strains of experimental physics. Cosmos is a system of countless straining relations, a complex of *Energie-strömen*. Psychophysically the cosmic character appears, so far, as an organism of vital activities risen to the level of animal subconsciousness. In us this cosmic animal has varied to the high level of personal consciousness.

But then, the "*eternal*" of rationalism is an unnecessary hypothesis, if only *human* character be allowed *cosmic* application and sweep. If conscious aiming is now and practically universal in the cosmic life, to say that it has been eternally so adds nothing significant to the present facts and life of the world-soul. The fact is that the hypothesis of an eternal, infinite character unconsciously seeks to remedy the one glaring defect in positivism; namely, its inveterate thinking of man *apart* from cosmos. But the human organism is continuous with the unthinkably limpid stuff of which the universal life itself is a function. In a most important and literal sense the character of any part of the world-life is in its degree the character of the whole. The universal energy which all life draws upon its practically a per-

[1] I mean "scientific" as distinguished from the more passionate but shallower ethical positivism.

fect, limpid fluid. If I tap my desk here with my pen the world-ground is moved gelatinously throughout its whole being. Now, I permit in my person impulses of conscious purpose; these aims are like my pen-taps of a moment ago: whenever they hit the truth in the bull's-eye, they ring their reality into the whole cosmic life; and this by physical necessity, if you please. The cosmic life in us and through us has become in all its physical energies a personal animal. Should it turn back from the endless Person it now aims to become, should it seek to reduce or prevent the inflammation which in us brings it to conscious possession of all its own latent energies, it would surely degenerate into the blind, witless being it once was.

An infinite appetite for personal being is thus a third datum of the cosmic character.

## IV

Once we entertain the notion that the cosmic life is moved through and through by the birth of men within its being there remains only the task of ascribing to the cosmic character the ineradicable forms and passions of the human organism. For the religion of humanism will turn out to be in the highest degree anthropomorphic and anthropopathic in its experience of the divine life.

As to the anthropomorphic character of the cosmic life. The cosmic physique obviously is free from the parts and organs we commonly re-

mark in the frames of animals; it has no *systems*, circulatory, skeletal, urinogenital, and the like. It has not the blue eyes and fair hair of its Thracian idolator, nor the flat nose of the Ethiopian. It is as it were "all eye," "all ear," and "all thought." If it be physical at all, it would seem to have the quality of sensuous experience without the visible end-organs thereof.

Is, then, the cosmic life completely amorphous? This we can hardly say; for there is in fact a cosmic physique — planets, stars, earths, comets, all more or less harmoniously adjusted by this time into a systematic whole. Our thought of the cosmic life may thus in one point be psycho-*physical*, and anthropo*morphic*. It is of course a figure to speak of the universal life as "all eye" and "all ear." Regarding its *gross* anatomy, one would be nearer the literal truth in thinking of the cosmic physique as *all brain*. The stellar universe, once more in its *gross* anatomy, is not unlike the cellular structure of a human cerebrum.[1] Of all our animal psychophysical functions it is the cerebral which the cosmic life most nearly duplicates.

It would seem that we can dispense with every other form of physique save the nervous. Let idealism operate to remove that and the remaining reality is in the last degree unreal and im-

[1] If a cerebrum were magnified to be proportionate with the stellar universe, I imagine the individual neurons would present a spectacle not unlike that of the stars and planets of the elliptoid universe.

practical. Thus the cosmic life like the human, may be conceived as indefinitely changing the form of its neural physique, constantly refining its centers and perhaps generating new (astral) nervous systems *ad libitum*. But the neural *gist* must persist if the life, human or cosmic, is to be real and practical in its impulses and ideas.

Cosmic humanism is thus anthropomorphic in its religious intention. In its essential terms it gratifies men's ingrained passion for human form in the divine life; *i. e.*, by establishing in the place of the overturned God of hands and feet a real community of cerebral experience between man and the universal life. The physique of the cosmic life touches the physique of man in his most sensitive organ, the brain. Physical functioning of the highest order (ideal coördinations, associations, intracortical strains, and the like) is the same in both. The fourth datum of the cosmic life is thus brain-character.

If now we determine what this cerebral function is when void of all the more external organic sensations and functions of the human frame, we shall have some sense of the anthropopathic character of the cosmic life.

V

The elements left in our conscious processes after the elision of all sensory and organic qualities we are permitted to transcribe into the psychophysical life of the world-soul. We exclude at

once all the base constituents of our human experience, all organic and sensory processes. The cosmic brain exposes no lobes; nor is it attached sympathetically to the "systems" which enliven our human frames. What, then *is* this pure, cerebral experience?

1. There is in our human system a certain grossness of psychophysical experience. But we aim always to submit our muscle and joint strains, visceral sensations and all that, to the control of our higher, cerebral energies. Now, we may suppose that this subordination of lower under higher centers is furthered and affirmed by the cosmic life, for the excellent reason that in the universal life the lower centers are not *central* and indeed do not exist: all *its* energies are physically, practically ideal. I dare say, the exquisite energizing of the human organism when the cerebral function is uppermost is due to the fact that its energy is then directly in the stream of the cosmic life's cerebral energy. The human brain duplicates in its measure the physical harmonies of the celestial spheres.

2. Now, if this cosmic life is cerebral, it has more in common with the human than either mystic ecstasy or pessimistic coma has yet dreamed of in their philosophies of escape from phenomenal being. There is a dash of insanity in each of these extremes: mania in the one instance and melancholia with terminal coma in the other. The cosmic character, above all, must be well balanced;

it must not blink the facts of its experience in an unbroken, maniacal ecstasy, nor must it wear itself out in the currents of being till it seeks relief in the unconscious silence in which its articulate purposes are set.

Just here I think, we uncover the supreme datum of the cosmic character — its conscious sanity. The cosmic life on its conscious side may well be assaulted by world-weariness. It is indeed in the highest degree probable that the energy-strains of the universal life should become fearfully fatiguing. In such an event the planets would continue on their unbroken course just as our neurons remain in their proper places even while wearing themselves out toward weariness and unconsciousness. Cosmic health and sanity is an achievement, as we have already remarked. To balance its world-soul between these extremes of endless, senseless, ecstasy, on the one hand and endless, vegetative subconsciousness, on the other, I conceive to be the supreme achievement of the cosmic character.

These, then, are the congenital feelings in the cosmic life: strain and haul, now ecstatic and again depressant, but with a practical intelligence that maintains the cosmic sanity.

3. The emotions in particular which characterize this balancing process are in the human case the feelings of *patience* and *hopefulness*. These melioristic feelings lie just between the extremes of world-pain and world-joy. In their pure form

they are, we may suppose, non-sensuous, intracortical. Meanwhile, or perhaps just because they are cerebral, they are emotions which simply reek with character. They alone, I fancy, are the emotions which on *second* thought our anthropopathic religion would be willing to transcribe into the cosmic character. On *first* thought we select unbroken *joy* as the pathetic datum of the divine life. But such a gift, as we have seen, cheapens and indeed cancels all the other virtues of conscious life. Accepting it one's life becomes at once supraconscious and impractical. The desideratum of conscious, practical life would be to face eternity hopefully and patiently. And now this enduring patience and hopefulness are literal data of the cosmic character. They are congenital and ineradicable in the well-balanced mind. Sanity is indeed just *practical intelligence*, buoyancy, rebounding energy — in a word patience and hopefulness, the ability to await patiently the returning of life's energies and buoyant confidence in life's outcome. Our postulate of the cosmic sanity involves these emotions as its necessary data.

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